



**BLYTHEWOOD**  
• SOUTH CAROLINA •

# 2020-2030 Comprehensive Plan

ADOPTED [DATE]

**RESOLUTION OF  
THE TOWN OF BLYTHEWOOD PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION OF ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, the Town of Blythewood Planning Commission has revised the Comprehensive Plan, which contains all elements required by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 as amended in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, pursuant to SC Code Sections 6-29-520(B), desires to recommend to the Town of Blythewood Council the adoption by ordinance of the plan;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town of Blythewood Planning Commission that the revised comprehensive plan, including the text and maps, are recommended to the Town of Blythewood Council for adoption by ordinance, after public hearing, in accordance with SC Code Section 6-29-530.

Adopted by the affirmative votes of at least a majority of the entire membership of the Planning Commission this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.



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## 2020-2030 Comprehensive Plan

### Town Council

Bryan Franklin, Mayor  
Edward Baughman, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Donald Brock  
Sloan Griffin, III  
Rich McKenrick

### Planning Commission

Malcolm Gordge, Chairperson  
Edward Kesser, Vice-Chairperson  
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### Staff

Carroll Williamson, Town Administrator  
Saralyn Yarborough, Assistant to Town Administrator



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# **2020-2030 Comprehensive Plan**

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# 1 Introduction

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## Introduction

The comprehensive plan serves as a general policy guide for use in planning for future growth and development. The plan relates existing conditions to a corresponding list of goals and strategies that reflect a vision for future growth and development. The plan provides a framework for making informed decisions about land development, economic growth, infrastructure improvements, housing, transportation, and protecting natural and cultural resources.

## Plan Requirements

The comprehensive plan satisfies the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (the Planning Act), which establishes the comprehensive plan as an essential part of the local government planning process. The law tasks the local planning commission with developing the comprehensive plan. Once adopted, the plan will become the blueprint for future growth and development as well as for the preparation and adoption of tools for implementation of the plan (e.g., the zoning ordinance and land development regulations). The framework for organizing the comprehensive plan as outlined in the Planning Act requires an examination of ten (10) planning elements, which are summarized in Table 1.1.

## Plan Organization

The comprehensive plan is organized so an individual chapter is devoted to one of the ten required elements. In accordance with the Planning Act, the elements include a discussion of existing conditions; an analysis of trends and their potential impacts; and the associated goals and implementation strategies. Each element also includes relevant maps, tables, and figures.

## Adoption Process

Once the comprehensive plan is complete, it must be adopted by the local government through the following process:

- A resolution by the local planning commission recommending the plan to the local governing body. The resolution must be recorded in the planning commission's official minutes, and the recommended plan must be forwarded to the local governing body.
- A public hearing must be held at least 30 days after publishing a notice or advertisement in a general circulation newspaper in the community.
- An ordinance is then adopted by the governing body, which cannot be approved until the planning commission has officially recommended the plan as described above.

## Monitoring and Maintenance

The Planning Act requires the planning commission to review the comprehensive plan or specific elements of it, as needed, but not less than once every five years to determine if amendments are necessary to account for any significant developments or changing needs in the community. The comprehensive plan, including all elements, must be fully updated and adopted by the process described above, at least every ten years. Because the current plan was drafted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and prior to the full release of the 2020 Decennial Census data, the Town should prioritize the five-year review to evaluate any potential changes to demographic and economic trends.



**Table 1.1: Required Comprehensive Plan Elements**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Contents</b>
Population	Growth and development, household characteristics, education, income, race, sex, age, health
Housing	Location, type, age, condition, affordability, occupancy, ownership
Natural Resources	Land and water resources, critical habitat, conservation and mitigation priorities, development constraints
Cultural Resources	Historic buildings, unique commercial, residential, and scenic areas, arts and culture
Economic Development	Workforce characteristics, employment, economic base, travel characteristics
Transportation	Network connectivity, traffic patterns, transit access, bike and pedestrian facilities
Community Facilities	Water and sewer, solid waste, public safety, education, parks and recreation
Land Use	Existing and future, neighborhood and town center, zoning and land development
Priority Investment	Funding, capital improvement needs, intergovernmental coordination, priority areas
Resiliency	Flooding and natural hazard vulnerability; public health, safety, and welfare; resilient planning and development; coordination




## Public Engagement


The Town of Blythewood engaged the community in the development of this plan by releasing a public input survey in the Spring of 2021, and holding a public meeting in the Fall of 2021. The survey was made available on the Town’s website and hard copies were distributed. Over 400 survey responses were received. The survey results provided the Town with insight into public perspectives on issues ranging from growth and development to the adequacy of public services and facilities. When asked about their biggest concerns for the future of Blythewood, survey respondents consistently expressed concern about uncontrolled growth, traffic congestion, inadequate infrastructure, and loss of community character. Despite these concerns, over 68% of respondents felt the existing quality of life in the community was good, and 20% felt it was excellent. The survey results also expressed citizen support for increased park and recreation facilities, rural land and open space preservation, bike and pedestrian facilities, and additional retail, dining, and entertainment options. A summary of results from the survey are provided in Tables 1.2 and 1.3.

To supplement the public survey and to solicit feedback on the draft plan, the Town held a public meeting on September 23, 2021 at Doko Manor. At this meeting Town staff provided citizens with an overview of the survey results, the existing conditions analysis, and the draft goals and strategies. Participants were then given an opportunity to ask questions and provide input.

Public input, strategic visioning from Town Council, and information from the existing conditions analysis was then used to develop a vision and value statement and eight strategic comprehensive plan goals. The vision statement and goals are summarized on page 11 and provide the framework for the implementation strategies identified for each element of the plan.



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SCAN ME

TOWN OF BLYTHEWOOD STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE

First of all, thank you! The Town of Blythewood is growing and we need your valuable input. The purpose of this survey is to help the Town provide you with the best services, identify areas of need, and protect you and your family as best we can. The survey should take you less than 10 minutes to complete. Then stay tuned to news from the Town as we update our 10-year Plan for Blythewood. We look forward to hearing from you!

DISCLAIMER AND STATEMENT OF USE AND PRIVACY

Your information is used only for the purposes set forth above. It is not shared with any entity outside of the Town of Blythewood’s uses set forth above. Unless requested, your answers will not be used for anyone to contact you for services. Your answers will not be sold to a third party or allowed to be used for marketing any products or services to you. This information is to help our town grow in a thoughtful way that reflects the values of those of us who live in or near the town limits. We welcome your thoughts and concerns.







**Table 1.2: Public Input Summary**

Why Blythewood?	Assets/Positive Changes	Concerns/Negative Changes	What Are We Missing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community rural character</li> <li>• Close to employer</li> <li>• Family and friends</li> <li>• Good place to raise children</li> <li>• Family roots</li> <li>• Type of housing</li> <li>• Availability of housing</li> <li>• Reasonable tax rate</li> <li>• Proximity to Columbia</li> <li>• Cost of living</li> <li>• Quality of schools</li> <li>• Housing cost</li> <li>• Large lots</li> <li>• Proximity to Lake</li> <li>• Community Character</li> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Recommended</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Housing Cost</li> <li>• Interstate Access</li> <li>• Proximity to Charlotte</li> <li>• Golf</li> <li>• Low Taxes</li> <li>• Horses/Farms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doko Meadows/Doko Manor</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Positive growth</li> <li>• New businesses</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Family friendly events</li> <li>• WIFI access</li> <li>• Community/cultural events</li> <li>• Freeway music</li> <li>• Farmers market</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Police sub-station</li> <li>• Gateway landscaping</li> <li>• Proximity to Charlotte/Columbia</li> <li>• Interstate Access</li> <li>• Good quality of life</li> <li>• Adequate recreation facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much growth, overcrowding, sprawl</li> <li>• Traffic/congestion and road infrastructure</li> <li>• Inadequate infrastructure, public facilities, and services</li> <li>• Loss of rural, small town character</li> <li>• Inadequate amenities (dining, entertainment, shopping)</li> <li>• Increasing crime</li> <li>• Inadequate schools</li> <li>• Need for better planning</li> <li>• Too much commercialization (chains, fast food, big box stores, etc.)</li> <li>• Loss of natural and cultural resources</li> <li>• Housing quality</li> <li>• Increased cost of living</li> <li>• Inadequate recreation facilities</li> <li>• Lack of community identify</li> <li>• Inadequate bike and pedestrian facilities</li> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• Need for equity and inclusion</li> <li>• Inadequate water supply</li> <li>• Lack of downtown/Town center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks/open space</li> <li>• Trails</li> <li>• Restaurants</li> <li>• Shopping</li> <li>• Park amenities</li> <li>• Pedestrian connectivity</li> <li>• Entertainment Activities</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Expanded water service</li> <li>• Better police coverage</li> <li>• Town Center</li> <li>• Small businesses</li> <li>• Community pond</li> <li>• Equestrian facilities</li> <li>• Community center</li> <li>• Community activities</li> </ul>



**Table 1.3: Public Input Summary**

Keyword	Description	Responses	Percent
Growth	Too much growth, uncontrolled development, overcrowding, sprawl	373	65.44%
Transportation	Traffic and congestion issues, roads not keeping up with growth	187	32.81%
Infrastructure/Services	Inadequate infrastructure, public facilities, and public services; not keeping up with growth	83	14.56%
Community Character	Loss of rural, small town character	74	12.98%
Amenities	Inadequate amenities such as dining, entertainment, shopping, locally owned businesses, town center	49	8.60%
Crime	Increasing crime	32	5.61%
Schools	Inadequate schools; not keeping up with growth	29	5.09%
Planning	Need for better planning and growth management	29	5.09%
Commercialization	Too much commercialization (e.g., fast food, big box stores, chains)	25	4.39%
Environment	Concern for natural and cultural resources as a result of growth (e.g., loss of open space)	19	3.33%
Housing	Concern for increase in low income housing; increase in cheap, poorly constructed housing	18	3.16%
Cost of Living	Increasing taxes, HOA fees, housing costs	15	2.63%
Recreation	Inadequate recreation facilities and youth activities, not keeping up with growth	11	1.93%
Identity/Branding/ Appearance	Lack of community identity; need for better branding and recognition; poor appearance	7	1.23%
Bike/Pedestrian	Inadequate bike and pedestrian facilities	6	1.05%
Leadership	Not enough community leadership	3	0.53%
Inclusivity	Need for equity and inclusion	3	0.53%
Annexation	Need for annexation to better control growth	3	0.53%



## Vision and Value Statement

Blythewood is a safe, clean, friendly and prosperous community that is welcoming to visitors, with a vibrant small-town, rural atmosphere, great natural beauty and amenities that facilitate a high quality of life for residents of all ages and interests. Blythewood strives to be a model of contemporary small town America, seamlessly touching the past through its rural and historic character, while actively embracing a bright future.

## Comprehensive Plan Goals

To achieve this vision, the Town of Blythewood will...

1. Support the health, economic well-being, and quality of life for all residents, visitors, and businesses (Population)
2. Support a diverse and resilient local and regional economy (Economic)
3. Ensure an adequate and balanced supply of quality housing options are available and accessible to residents of all ages and incomes (Housing)
4. Protect, preserve, and promote Blythewood's natural and cultural resources (Natural and Cultural Resources)
5. Coordinate with partners to mitigate congestion, implement road improvements, and promote multi-modal connectivity (Transportation)
6. Provide a high level of public services and infrastructure in an efficient, cost-effective, and respectful manner (Community Facilities, Priority Investment)
7. Coordinate with community partners and neighboring jurisdictions to manage growth and preserve Blythewood's small town, rural character (Land use)
8. Build community resilience by strengthening Blythewood's ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards, economic downturns, and other community vulnerabilities (Resilience)



# 2 Population





## Introduction

The population element of the comprehensive plan describes the population and demographic characteristics of the Town. Information presented is based on a combination of Decennial Census data and census estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS). Key areas of analysis include growth and development trends; demographic characteristics; income, poverty, and education; and public health and wellness.

## Growth and Development

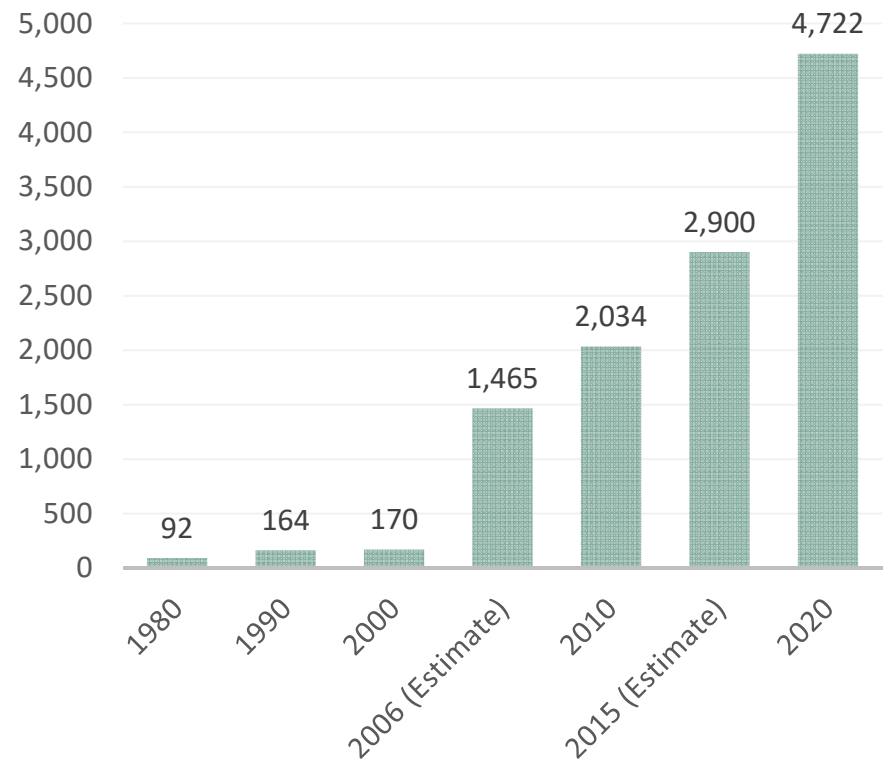
The Town of Blythewood is part of the Columbian Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and is located in the northeastern portion of Richland County, one of the most populous and fastest growing counties in the state. For many decades the Town and surrounding area was considered to be a small rural community with a stable population. Between 1980 and 2000, the population of the Town only grew by 78 people to a total of 170. Beginning in the 1990s, the population of northeast Richland County began to grow at a rapid pace as suburban residential development expanded outwards from the city of Columbia. These development trends began to impact the Town of Blythewood in the early 2000s as water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure improved.

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of Blythewood grew by 1,864 people. This number more than doubled over the next ten years resulting in a 2020 population of 4,722. Some of this rapid growth over the last several decades, particularly between 2000 and 2010 is the result of annexation, but also reflects the residential growth and development patterns impacting this portion of Richland County. These trends are expected to continue over the next 30 years. Population projections from Central Midlands Council of Governments anticipate an additional forty plus thousand people in the Blythewood area by the year 2050. Most of this development is low density in nature and spread out on the peripheries of Town.

## 2020 Census Town of Blythewood Population

# 4,772

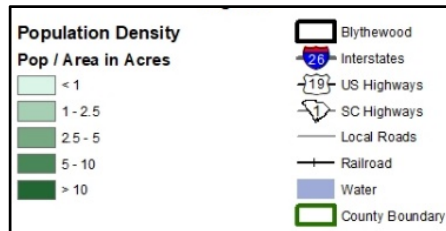
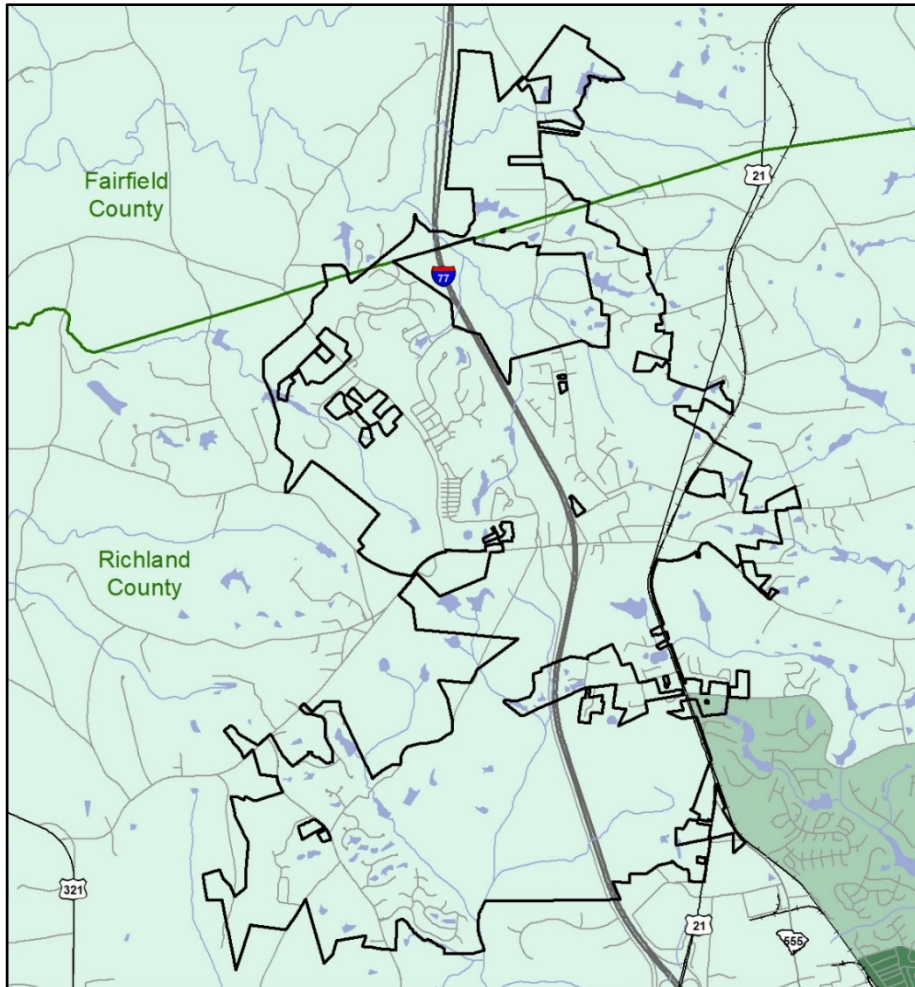
Figure 2.1: Population Change



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Map 2.1: Population Density



Map 2.2: Total Population

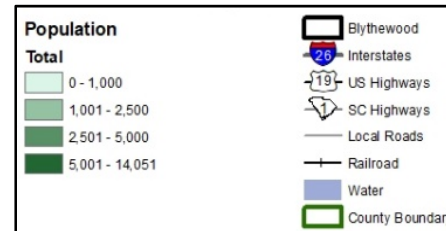
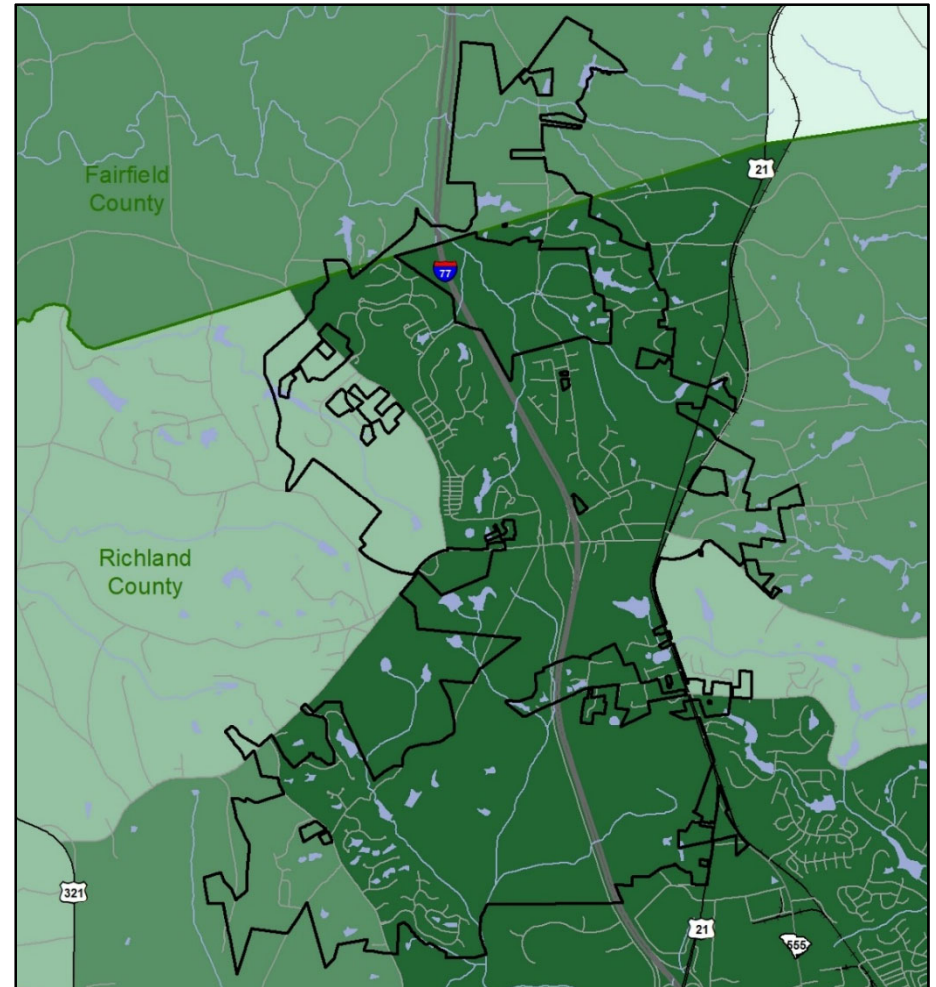
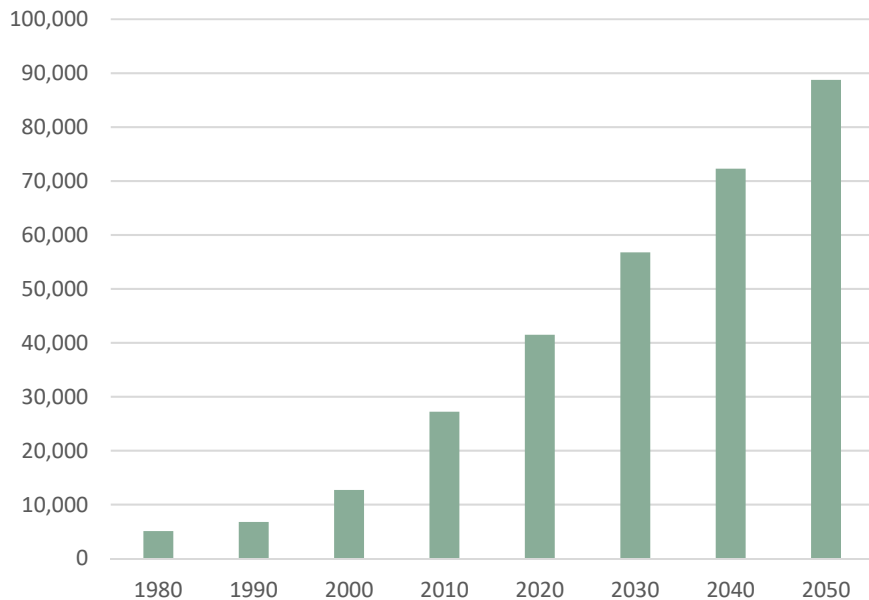


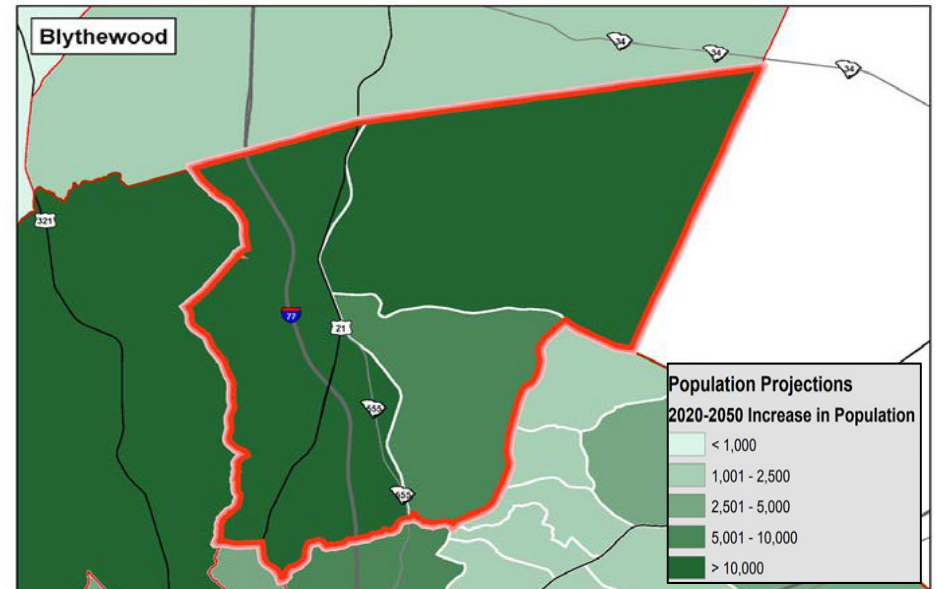


Figure 2.2: Blythewood Area Population Projections



Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

Map 2.3: Blythewood Area Population Projections



Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

## Demographic Characteristics

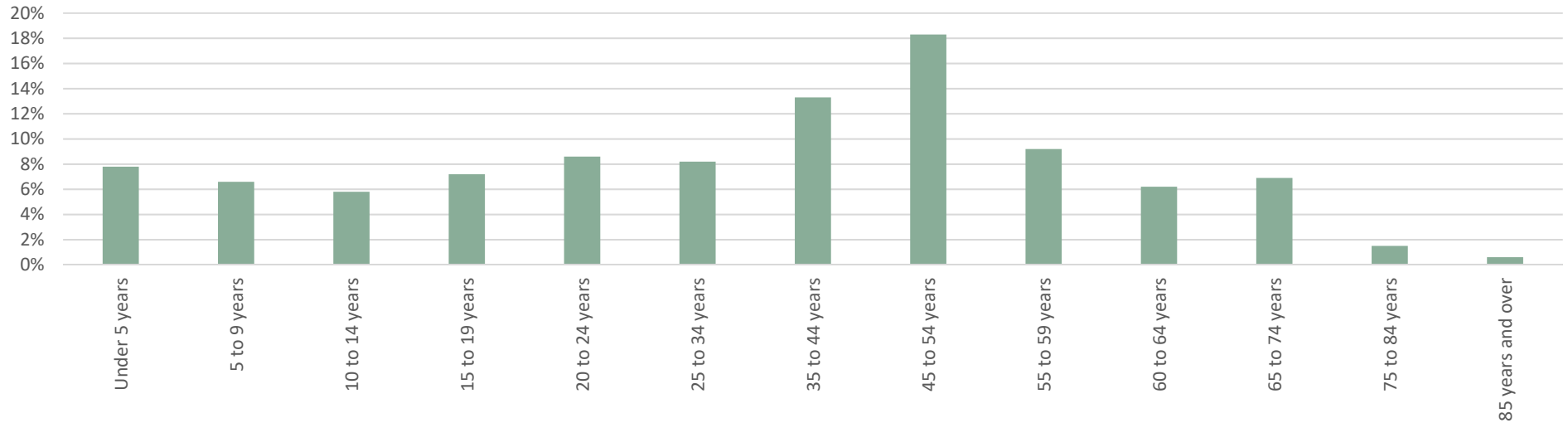
The population of Blythewood is 57.3% white and 38.4% African American. Asian Americans make up approximately 3% of the Town’s population and American Indians make up 0.3% of the population. Hispanic or Latinos of any race make up 2.5% of the population based on 2019 American Community Survey Estimates.

The Median age in Blythewood is 40.6 and 24.7% of the population is under the age of 18 indicating the prevalence of young families with school age children. This is supported by an average household size of 3.14 persons per household. The aging population (65 and older) makes up 9.03% of the population with the largest percentage residing in the lower end of this age cohort.

Over the next ten years the 65 and older population will continue to grow as more retirees move into the area and the existing population ages. Because Blythewood is attractive to both young families and retirees, it is important from a planning perspective to ensure there are adequate services and facilities in place to accommodate and maintain a high quality of life for both populations.



**Figure 2.3: Age Ranges (Percent of Total Population)**



**Table 2.1: Race and Ethnicity**

Race alone or in combination with one or more other races	Blythewood	Richland	SC
White	57.3%	47.2%	69.2%
Black or African American	38.4%	49.1%	28.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Asian	3.5%	3.5%	2.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%
Some other race	2.0%	2.5%	2.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2.50%	5.2%	5.7%

Percent 18 Under  
**24.7%**

Percent 65 Older  
**9.03%**

Median Age  
**40.6**

Percent Male  
**50.4%**

Percent Female  
**49.6%**

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates





## Income and Poverty

The 2019 average household income for Blythewood was \$135,952, which is significantly higher than Richland County and South Carolina. The 2019 median household income of Blythewood was \$104,049 which means half of the Town’s households have incomes less than that amount and half have household incomes that are more. Approximately 7.7 percent of households make less than \$50,000 per year while 32 percent make over \$150,000 per year.

The US Census Bureau determines poverty status by comparing pre-tax cash income against a threshold that is set at three times the cost of a minimum food diet. This cost is updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and adjusted for family size, composition, and age of householder. The 2019 ACS estimate for the percentage of all people below the poverty level for Blythewood was 2.2% and the number of families was 0.5%, both of which are significantly lower than Richland County and the state of South Carolina.

Average Household Income

**Blythewood**

**\$135,952**

**Richland County**

**\$76,280**

**South Carolina**

**\$73,520**

**Table 2.2: Poverty Levels**

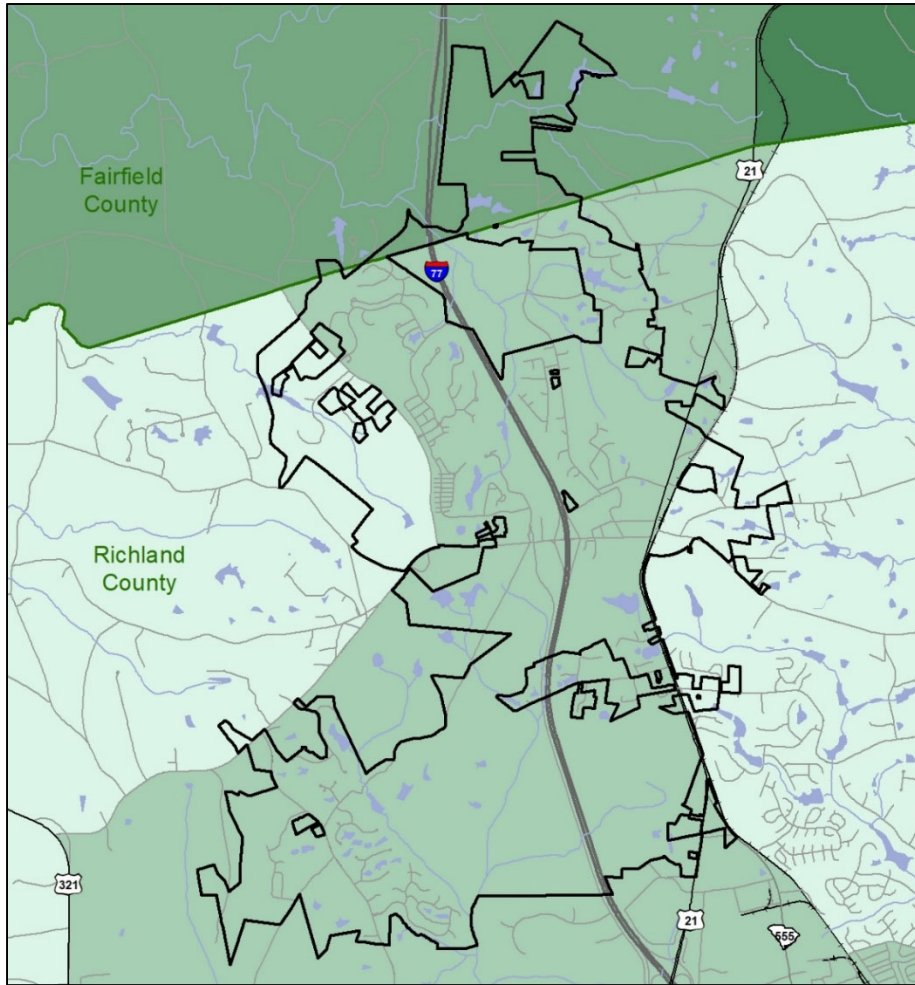
	US	SC	Richland	Blythewood
All families with Income Below Poverty Level (Past 12 Months)	9.5%	10.9%	11.2%	0.5%
All people with Income Below Poverty Level (Past 12 Months)	13.4%	15.2%	16.2%	2.2%
Households Receiving Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits	11.70%	12.30%	12.90%	3.60%
HUD Percent Low and Moderate Income	-	-	45.26%	17.58%

**Table 2.3: Income Ranges**

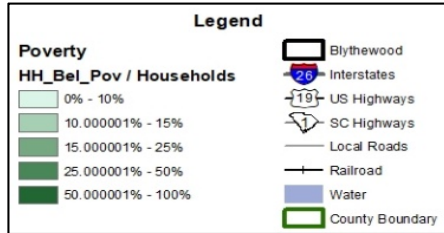
Percent Income Range	
Less than \$10,000	2.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	0.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	2.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	17.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	13.7%
\$200,000 or more	18.5%



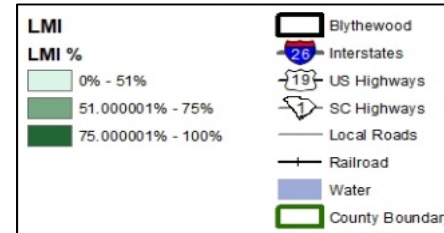
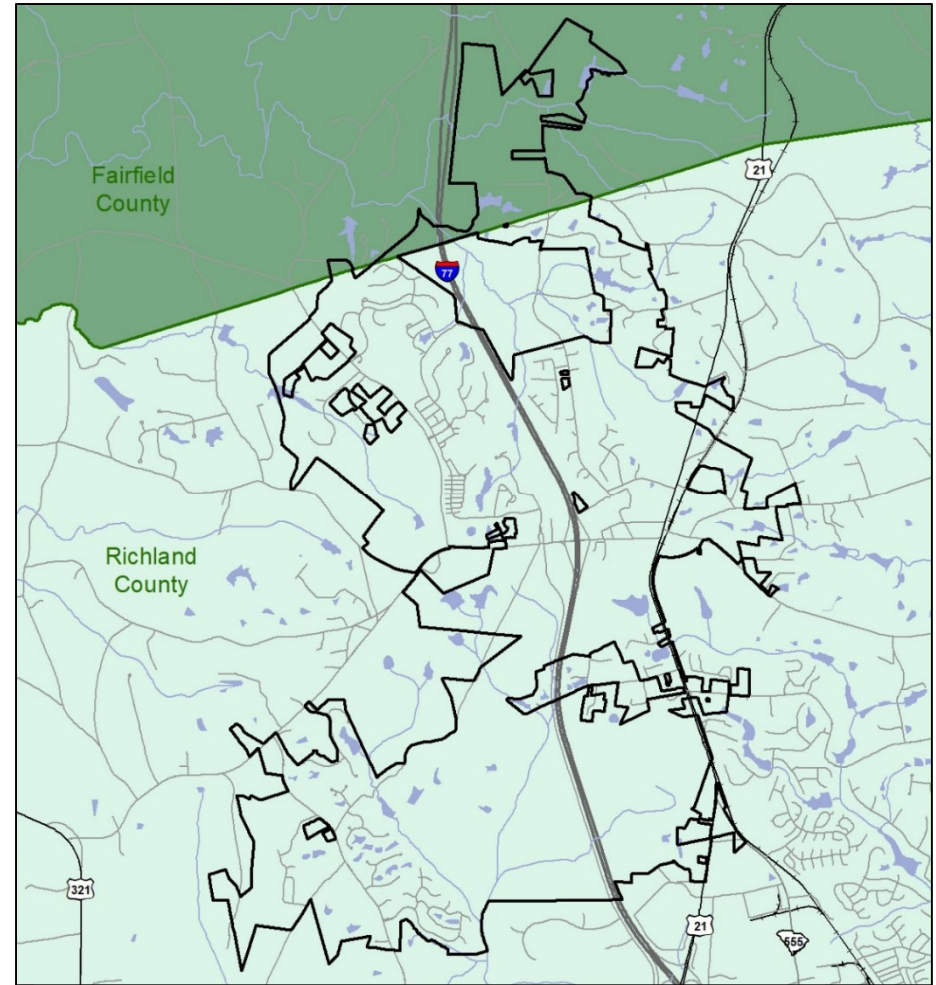
Map 2.4: Households Below the Poverty Level



**Note:** The data shown on this map is based on 2010 Census Block Group boundaries, which do not correspond with the municipal limits of the Town.



Map 2.5: Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Population





## Summary of Key Findings

- The 2020 population of Blythewood was 4,772
- Blythewood's population increased 134.6% between 2010 and 2020
- Blythewood is located in one of the fastest growing areas of the Central Midlands Region which is expected to continue growing over the next 30 years
- Blythewood has a young population with a median age of 40.6
- The percent of population 65 and older is increasing
- Blythewood is becoming more diverse
- The poverty rate is significantly lower than Richland County and South Carolina
- Richland County has an adult obesity rate of 34%
- 3.6% of households receive food stamps/SNAP

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Growth Management.** As the Town and surrounding areas grow, it is important for the Town to continue coordinating with Richland County and other stakeholders to ensure compatibility for new, proposed housing developments in northeast Richland County. The Town should also coordinate with partners to identify opportunities for preserve open space and working land uses.

**Multi-generational Needs.** The Town should work with partner organizations to ensure the availability of adequate public services and facilities to accommodate both the aging population as well as millennials and young families.

**Diversity and Equity.** Blythewood should celebrate its racial and ethnic diversity through inclusionary festivals and public events planning, and in promoting equal opportunity and access to all Town programs and services.

## GOAL #1

**Support the health, economic well-being, and quality of life for all residents, visitors, and businesses**

### Strategies:

- Support the aging population by working with local and regional senior service providers to identify needs and assist with project and program delivery
- Attract and retain millennials and young families by supporting policies and projects that continue to position Blythewood as a regional destination and activity center (e.g., community events, recreational facilities, trails and greenspace, etc.)
- Promote diversity and social equity in all Town policies, program, and services (e.g., procurement policy, zoning ordinance, community events, new cultural center)
- Support public health initiatives with a focus on healthy eating and active living
- Monitor growth and development trends by annually tracking building permits, business licenses, and decennial census updates
- Promote and expand opportunities for community and civic engagement



# 3 Economic

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## Introduction

The economic development element of the comprehensive plan inventories labor force characteristics and provides an analysis of the Town’s economic base by inventorying employment trends by place of residence, place of work, and industry type. Economic data is derived from the US Census Bureau data unless otherwise noted. Some of this data is based on forecasts from the 2010 Decennial Census and will not necessarily reflect actual and more recent numbers. Furthermore, this comprehensive plan (including the economic development element) was drafted during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Town of Blythewood has experienced profound economic impacts during the midst of the crisis, the long-term impacts are yet to be determined.

## Background

Even before its incorporation in 1879, Blythewood's existence was tied to a major transportation corridor. Historically, the railroad served as the lifeline for the Town. Even the original name of Doko described the Town's role as a "watering place" for the trains passing through the region. With the closing of the depot in 1968, and the completion of I-77 through Columbia, the interstate has replaced the railroad as the catalyst for development, and has had an even greater impact. Both the railroad and the interstate brought commercial development to the center, or "heart" of the Town. Commercial activities, such as shops and restaurants, developed to serve not only the residents in the area but travelers who were passing through the Town. The interstate has impacted the Town beyond providing commercial activities, as it also provides a means for residents to easily commute to the Columbia (and even Charlotte) markets for job opportunities and quality of life amenities. This dynamic has positioned Blythewood and Northeast Richland County for rapid residential growth and development.

## Labor Force Characteristics

Blythewood has a civilian labor force of approximately 1,863 workers ages 16 and over. Of these, over 35% have an average commute time of between 25 and 35 minutes. Approximately 89% of the civilian labor force drives alone to work. The labor force participation rate is 71.7% with 70% employed, 0.6% unemployed, and 0.7% serving in the armed forces.

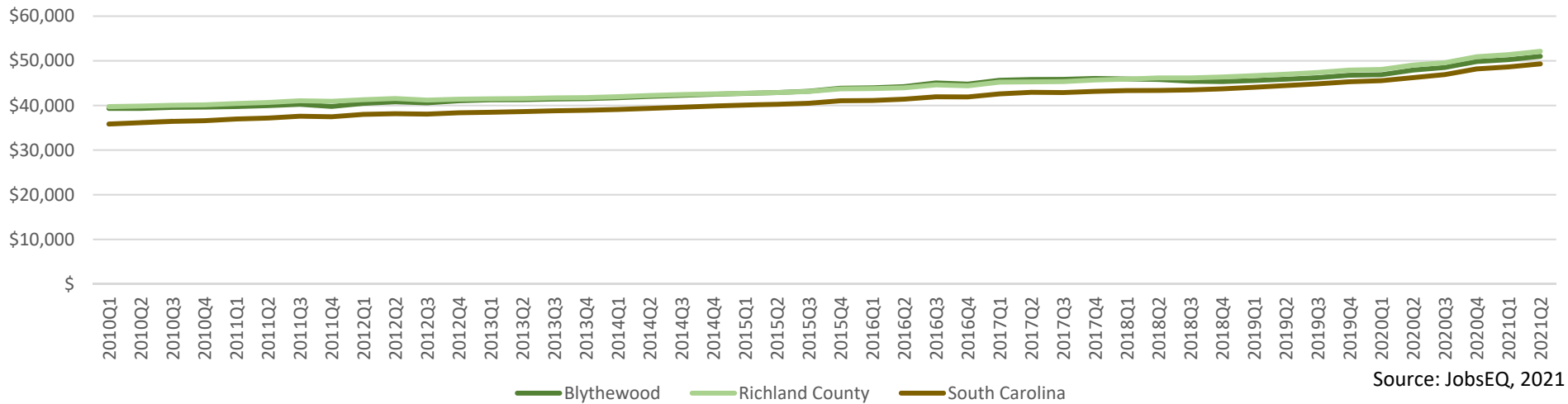
**Table 3.1: Labor Force Characteristics**

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	2,598	-
In labor force	1,863	71.7%
Civilian labor force	1,844	71.0%
Employed	1,829	70.4%
Unemployed	15	0.6%
Armed Forces	19	0.7%
Not in labor force	735	28.3%
Civilian labor force	1,844	-
Unemployment Rate	(X)	0.8%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



**Figure 3.2: Average Annual Wages 2010 - 2021**



The average worker in the Town of Blythewood, SC earned annual wages of \$50,999 as of the first quarter of 2021. Average annual wages per worker increased 6.4% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages for the same period were \$49,389 for the Columbia MSA and \$64,141 for the United States. As shown in Figure 3.2, growth in average annual wages over the last decade has tracked steadily with Richland County and South Carolina.

Blythewood has high educational attainment levels with 96.3% of people 25 and older having a high school degree or higher. Over 50% of people 25 and holder have a Bachelors degree or higher. These rates are significantly higher than South Carolina and the United States. Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Town of Blythewood is projected to grow 0.6% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 1.0% per year.

**Table 3.2: Educational Attainment**

	Estimate	Percent
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>		
Population 25 years and over	2,131	2,131
Less than 9th grade	46	2.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	32	1.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	397	18.6%
Some college, no degree	364	17.1%
Associate's degree	202	9.5%
Bachelor's degree	651	30.5%
Graduate or professional degree	439	20.6%
High school graduate or higher	2,053	96.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,090	51.1%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Employment by Industry and Occupation

The largest employment sectors in Blythewood are occupations related to management, business, and the arts; service occupations; and sales and office occupations. Collectively these make up 89% of occupational employment for employed civilians 16 years and over. The largest employment industries in Blythewood are educational services, healthcare, and social assistance; arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services; public administration; and manufacturing. The management and business occupational groups have the highest average wages per worker at \$111,400 per year, thus contributing to Blythewood's comparatively high income levels discussed in the population element of the plan. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 show employment percentages by occupation and industry. Map 3.1 and table 3.5 show the largest employers in Blythewood.

**Table 3.3: Employment by Occupation**

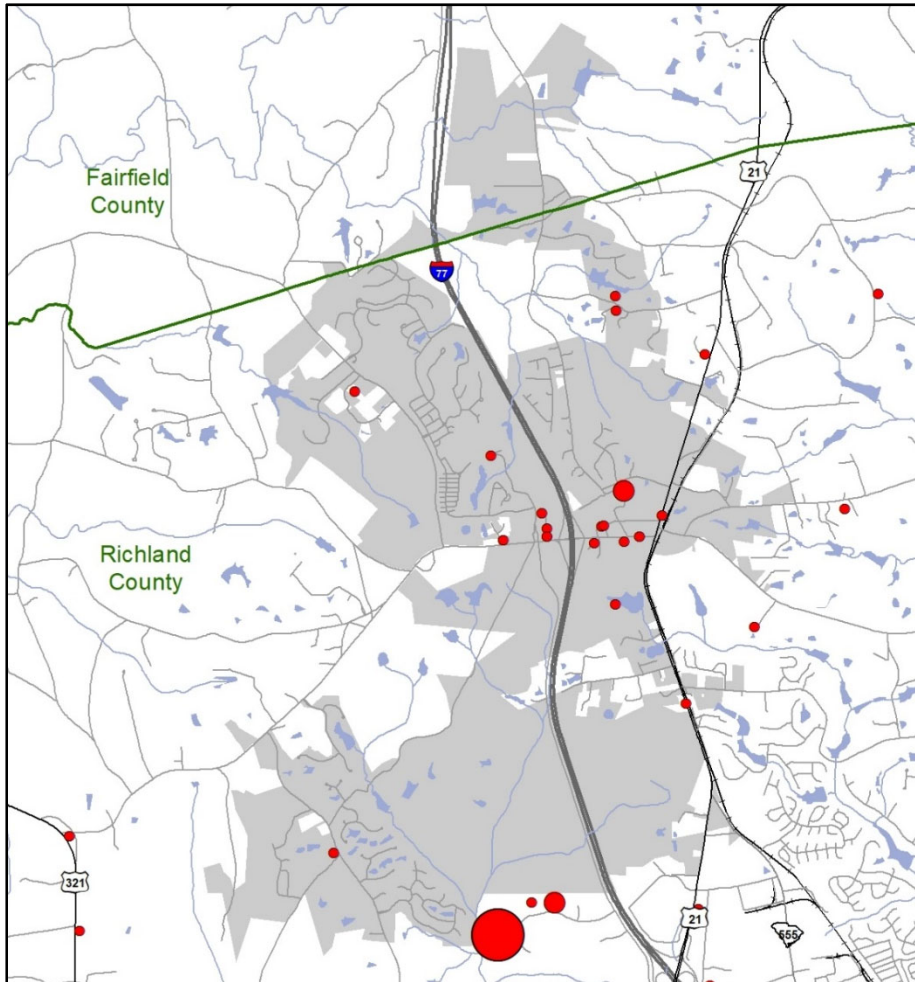
	Estimate	Percent
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,829	1,829
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	835	45.7%
Service occupations	424	23.2%
Sales and office occupations	372	20.3%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	39	2.1%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	159	8.7%

**Table 3.4: Employment by Industry**

	Estimate	Percent
<b>INDUSTRY</b>		
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,829	1,829
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0	0.0%
Construction	19	1.0%
Manufacturing	138	7.5%
Wholesale trade	15	0.8%
Retail trade	153	8.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	123	6.7%
Information	32	1.7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	201	11.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	245	13.4%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	450	24.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	242	13.2%
Other services, except public administration	69	3.8%
Public administration	142	7.8%



Map 3.1: Large Employers (Number of Employees)



Source: ESRI Community Analyst; Central Midlands Council Of Governments

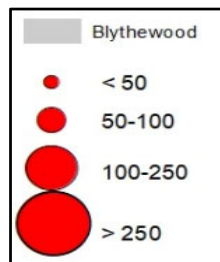


Table 3.5: Large Employers

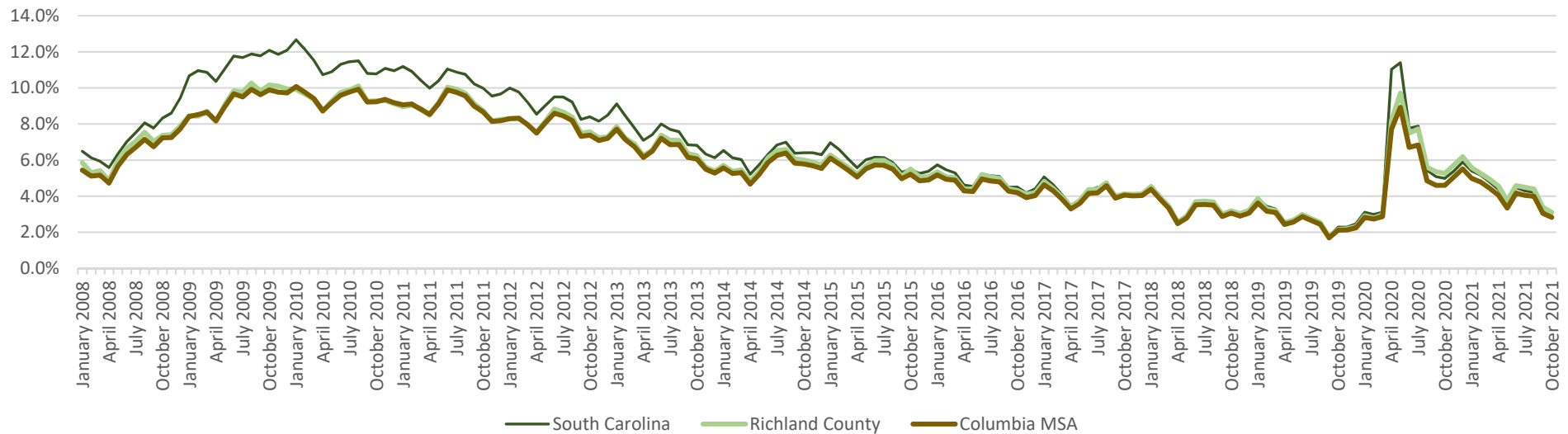
Business Name	Number of Employees	Sales Volume
Bethel-Hanberry Elementary	100	\$0
Coldwell Banker Residential	80	\$9,412,000
Fairfield Electric Co-op Inc.	62	\$24,541,000
Blythewood Iga Foodliner	55	\$9,599,000
Mc Donald's	52	\$2,464,000
Trinity United Methodist Church	52	\$0
Food Lion	50	\$8,727,000
Lizard's Thicket	50	\$2,369,000
Cobblestone Park Golf Club	45	\$4,788,000
Blythewood Academy	30	\$0
Commercial	30	\$3,813,000
Wendy's	30	\$1,422,000
Hardee's	25	\$1,185,000
Waffle House	22	\$1,043,000
Bojangles' Famous Chicken	20	\$948,000
Carolina Wings & Rib House	20	\$332,000
Cosby Technology Llc	20	\$3,057,000
Holiday Inn Express	20	\$1,554,000
Kentucky Fried Chicken	20	\$948,000
Papa John's Pizza	20	\$948,000

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates





**Figure 3.1: Unemployment Rate 2008 - 2021**



## Employment Trends

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the employment numbers were excellent with the unemployment rate at its lowest point since 2000. The 2019 ACS civilian labor force unemployment rate estimate for Blythewood was 0.8 percent, which is significantly lower than the 5.8 percent estimate for Richland County and South Carolina. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased unemployment rates. Quarterly unemployment rates went from an all time low in July 2019 to levels comparable to the great recession by April 2020. Since then, the unemployment rate has dropped, indicating progress towards economic recovery. Figure 3.1 shows unemployment trends for Richland County, the Columbia MSA, and South Carolina between 2008 and 2021.

## Economic Development

From an economic development standpoint, the Town of Blythewood is in an excellent position because of the continued growth and development in northeast Richland County. The sustained pace of residential development has also brought significant commercial, office, and industrial development over the last two decades. Amidst this growth, the Town of Blythewood has positioned itself as a regional destination and activity center. In order to keep up with the increasing demand for these services, the Town and residents have recognized the need for additional dining, entertainment, and shopping amenities. The demand for these services also creates an opportunity for small, locally owned businesses which is needed to balance the existing market saturation of chain retail and dining establishments.



Another economic asset for the Town is its proximity to a large industrial site that is planned for development over the next several years. In November 2019, Richland County purchased the approximately 1,350 acres site to develop it as a business and industrial park. Approximately 100 acres of frontage along a main corridor (Blythewood Road) was reserved for commercial development. This commercial property fronts the industrial park and will serve as the entrance for the northern portion of the park. Approximately 73 acres of the 100-acre commercial section is in the Town of Blythewood municipal limits, with the remaining 27 acres in Richland County. The Blythewood portion of the property is zoned as Town Center and the county portion is zoned as General Commercial. The county and the town have agreed that the county will follow the Town's existing zoning for this portion of the project.

To help establish a development plan for this site Richland County in the Fall of 2021 commissioned a technical assistance panel from the Urban Land Institute. The report provides a 7-Item Action Plan to help guide the County and the Town through the site development process. The action plan, which includes recommendations related to bike and pedestrian connectivity, recreational amenities, design guidelines, and marketing and branding, will provide a useful framework for ensuring ongoing coordination and collaboration between the Town and the County. In accordance with SC Code of Law Section 6-29-520 (C), the Richland County Technical Assistance Report is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.

**South Carolina**

**Panel Recommendation, Concept Plan for Subject Site**

**Richland County Technical Assistance Report  
Richland County, SC  
Fall 2021**



## Summary of Key Findings

- Labor force participation rate is strong
- Over 50% of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher
- Average HH Income is significantly higher than Richland County and South Carolina
- Average annual wages have increased steadily over the last 10 years
- Bethel Hanberry ES is one of the largest employers in the area
- Blythewood workers have a 23.9 minute average commute time
- Management, business, science, and art occupations make up the largest occupations at 45.7%
- Unemployment rate for Richland County is ~4.0% which is slightly higher than the Columbia MSA and SC
- Doko Manor and Doko Meadows Park are an economic asset
- Opportunities exist for strengthening the Town’s position as a regional event destination and activity center
- Industrial park presents opportunities for coordinated development

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Local Business Development.** Comments received during the public input meetings held for the development of this plan expressed a desire for more retail, dining and entertainment establishments. The Town should continue working with community partners to recruit business to the area and support the development of more small, locally owned enterprises to help fill this demand.

**Industrial Park Development.** The Richland County industrial park represents a significant economic development opportunity for the Town and the region. The Town should continue working with Richland County to implement the recommendations in the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance report.

## GOAL #2

## Support a diverse and resilient local and regional economy

### Strategies:

- Strengthen and grow the Town Center business district
- Grow small, locally owned, service and retail oriented businesses
- Coordinate with Richland County to develop adopt and implement plans for the industrial park
- Support/grow the local hospitality/entertainment industry
- Grow as a local and regional event destination/activity center
- Promote the farmers market, local agriculture, and other food related businesses
- Track/market available commercial space and lots

**Regional Event Destination and Activity Center.** The Town has positioned itself as a growing regional event destination and activity center. The Town should continue to invest in and grow the park and recreation facilities and event space at Doko Meadows. The Town should also continue expanding event programming throughout the year as resources allow.



# 4 Housing

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## Introduction

When the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (the Planning Act) was first passed, housing topics and issues were mainly addressed within the population and land use elements of the comprehensive plan. In 2007, the SC Legislature passed the Priority Investment Act, which amended the Planning Act to require a separate housing element to include an analysis of housing location, type, age, condition, occupancy, and affordability.

## Housing Growth

Residential property comprises one of the dominant land uses within and around the Town of Blythewood. The sustained growth trends discussed in the population element are directly correlated with residential development. The 1990 Census reported 71 housing units within the Town. By 2000, the number grew to 111, and by 2010 the number was 782; an increase of 711 housing units over the thirty year period. The 2020 Census reports the number of housing units as 1,760; an increase of 978 over 10 years. This growth only accounts for the housing units within the Town limits.

The larger Blythewood area has also seen significant growth over the last three decades, directly impacting the Town which serves as a focal point and activity center for this portion of Richland County. This sustained residential growth has put considerable pressure on the transportation, utility, and recreation infrastructure, as well as on public safety and other essential public services.

## 2020 Census Number of Housing Units

# 1,760

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 on the following page show the building permit activity in the Blythewood area from 2010 - 2020. Over this period a total of 2,135 residential building permits were issued. The majority of these permits were issued for single family residential developments with a combined value of over \$484 million. Over this same period only 188 multi-family units were built for a combined value of \$8.5 million. Much of the single family residential development in the Blythewood area is characterized by large multi-phased subdivisions. Examples within the Town include Cobblestone, Holly Berry, Ashley Oaks, and Abney Hills. Examples outside of the Town include Weston Woods and Summer Pines.

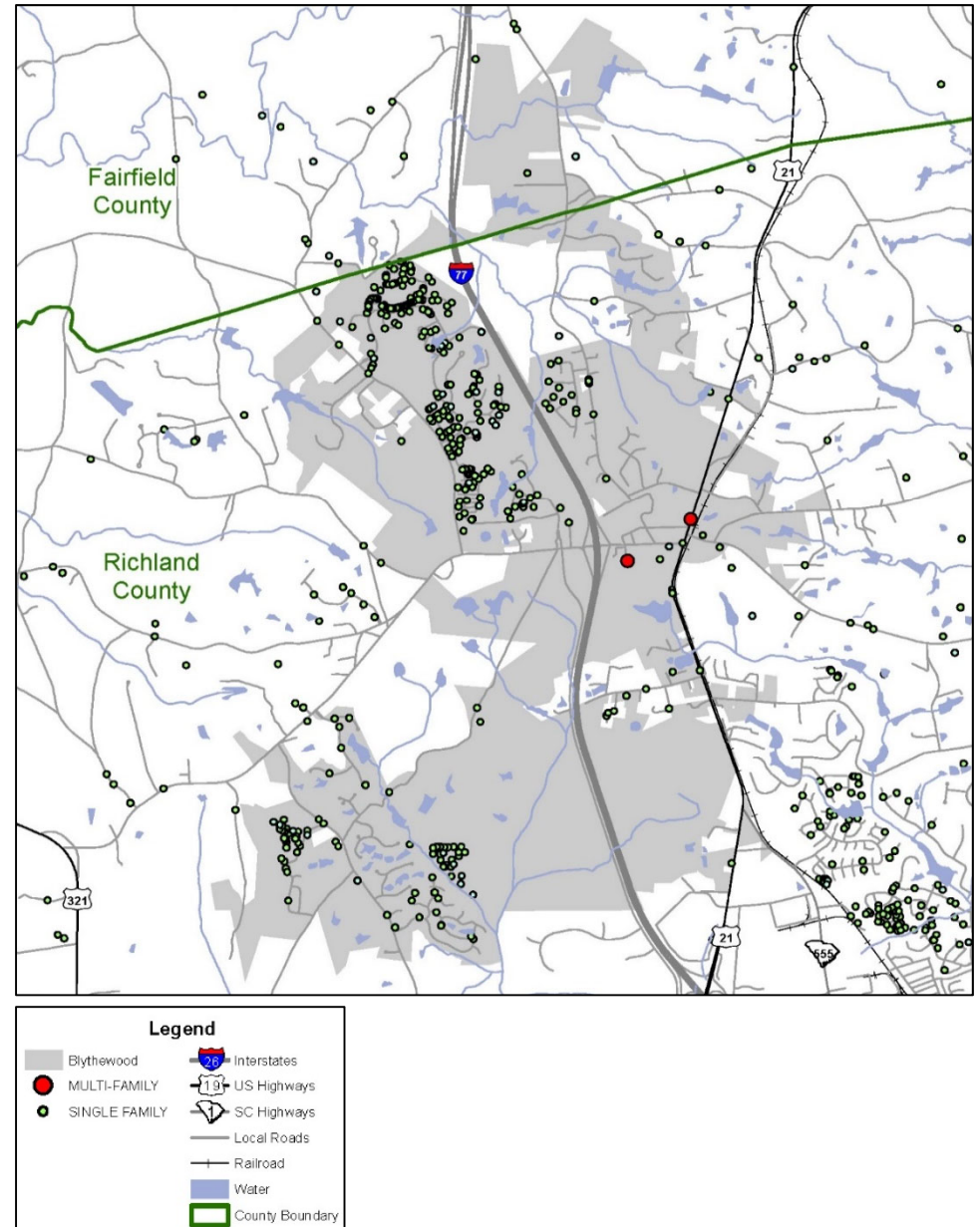
Blythewood Farms is another large subdivision with over 600 homes proposed that is being developed just outside of Town limits. This development will have significant impacts on the Town, including increased traffic congestion on Langford Road and surrounding areas.



**Table 4.1: Residential Building Permits Issued (2010-2020)**

Single Family			Multifamily		
Year	Units	Value	Year	Units	Value
2020	132	\$35,795,506.01	2020	48	\$7,074,110.00
2019	160	\$40,680,931.00	2019	0	\$0.00
2018	260	\$66,602,325.44	2018	0	\$0.00
2017	182	\$49,989,140.70	2017	0	\$0.00
2016	254	\$61,567,423.84	2016	140	\$1,507,341.00
2015	313	\$74,353,408.78	2015	0	\$0.00
2014	243	\$63,121,096.68	2014	0	\$0.00
2013	144	\$33,448,149.00	2013	0	\$0.00
2012	100	\$25,070,946.00	2012	0	\$0.00
2011	79	\$17,955,206.00	2011	0	\$0.00
2010	80	\$15,542,774.00	2010	0	\$0.00

**Map 4.1: Building Permits Issued (2010-2020)**



Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments



## Household Characteristics

The Town of Blythewood has a 2019 estimated household size of 3.14 persons per household. This number is significantly more than the average household size for Richland County, South Carolina, and surrounding communities. This high household number is reflective of the fact that the Blythewood area is attractive for families with young children. The dominant housing type of large, detached, single family residences caters to this demand. Of the 1,057 total households in Blythewood, 68.3% are married couple families, and 38% are households with one or more people under 18 years of age.

**2019  
5YR ACS  
Total Households**

**1,057**

**Average Household Size**

**2.54 | 2.51 | 3.14**

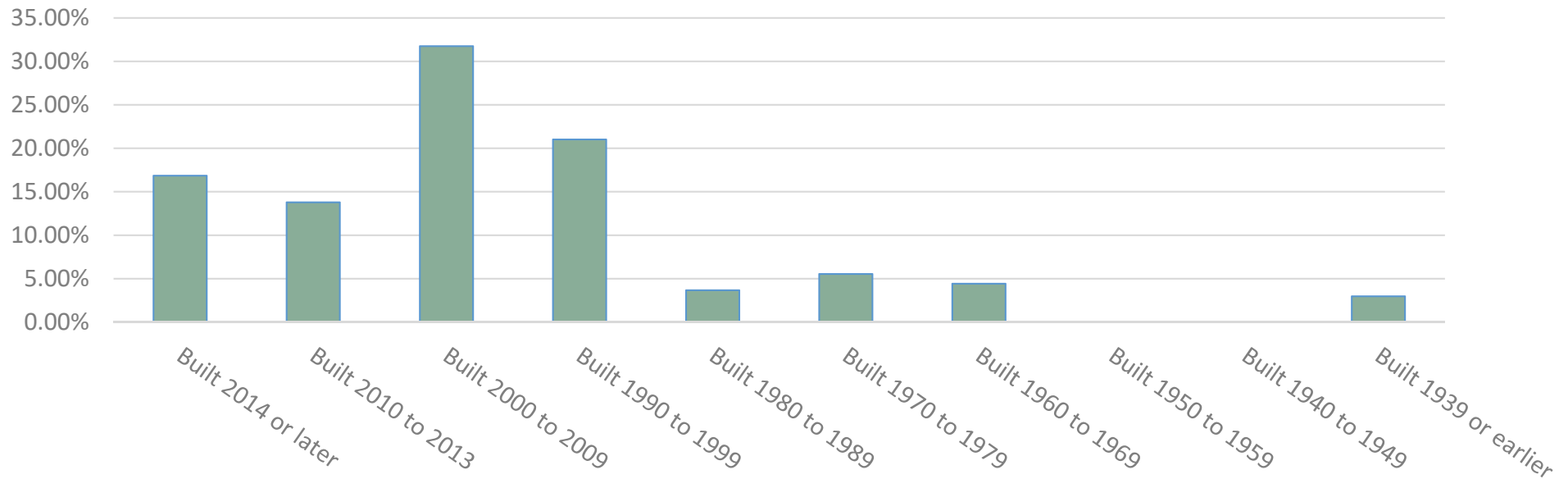
**Table 4.2: Household Characteristics**

	South Carolina		Richland County		Blythewood	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total households	1,921,862.00	-	151,853.00	-	1,057.00	-
Married-couple family	906,279.00	47.20%	58,833.00	38.70%	722.00	68.30%
65 years and over	148,296.00	7.70%	10,203.00	6.70%	25.00	2.40%
Households with one or more people under 18 years	565,432.00	29.40%	47,298.00	31.10%	402.00	38.00%
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	600,323.00	31.20%	36,435.00	24.00%	227.00	21.50%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



**Figure 4.1: Year Houses Built**



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Housing Stock Characteristics

**Housing Age.** Over 50 percent of Blythewood’s housing stock was built between 1990 and 2009, a building boom period during which many of the first phases of the Town’s large subdivisions were built. Blythewood has a very small percentage of houses built before 1950. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of houses built each decade. Map 4.2 shows the spatial distribution of the Town’s housing stock by decade built. These maps show how much of the newer residential development is concentrated on the peripheries of Town, while the older housing stock is located close to the original Town Center.

**Housing Type.** The housing stock in Blythewood is predominantly made up of single family detached units (94%). Approximately 33% of housing units have 9 rooms or more, and approximately 91% have three bedrooms or more, with 37% having four bedrooms or more. Two bedroom or less units make up less than 10% of the Town’s housing stock. The large size of houses is reflective of the higher priced, new construction that dominates the Town’s housing portfolio.

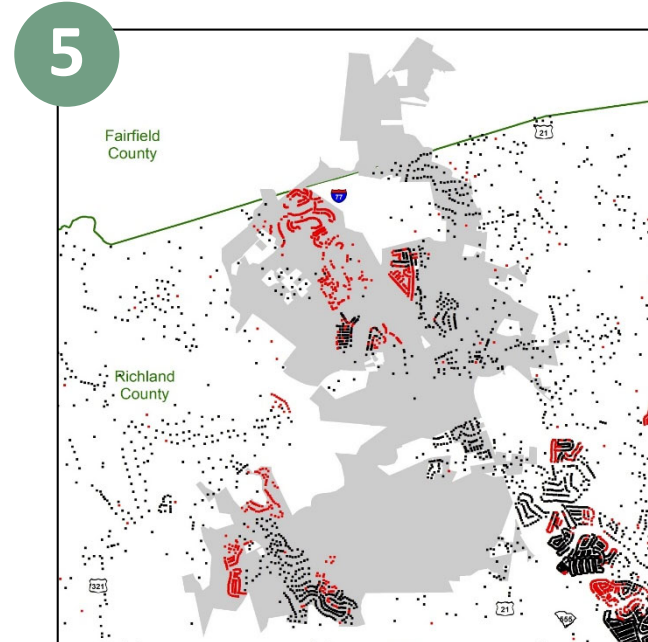
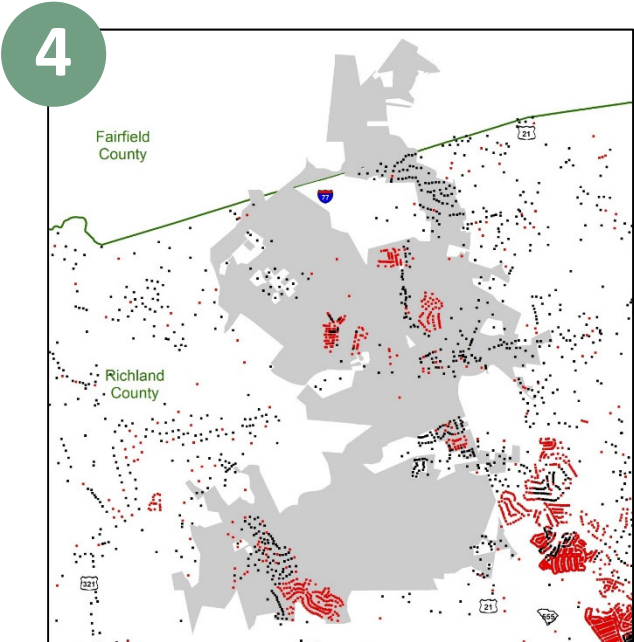
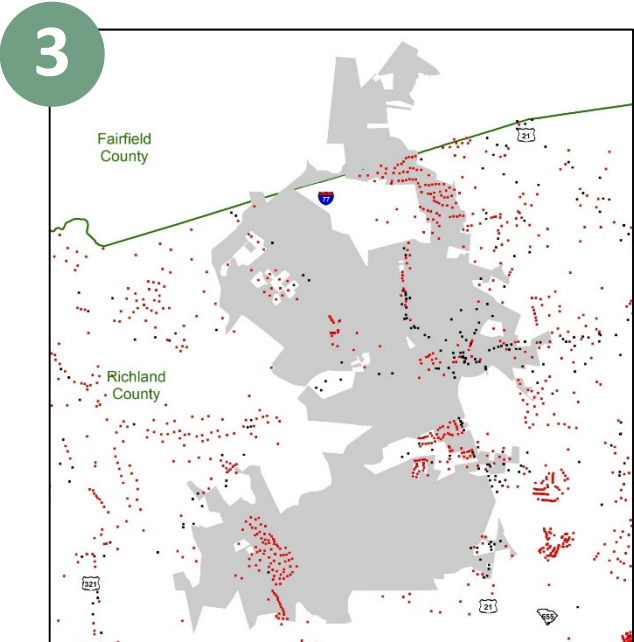
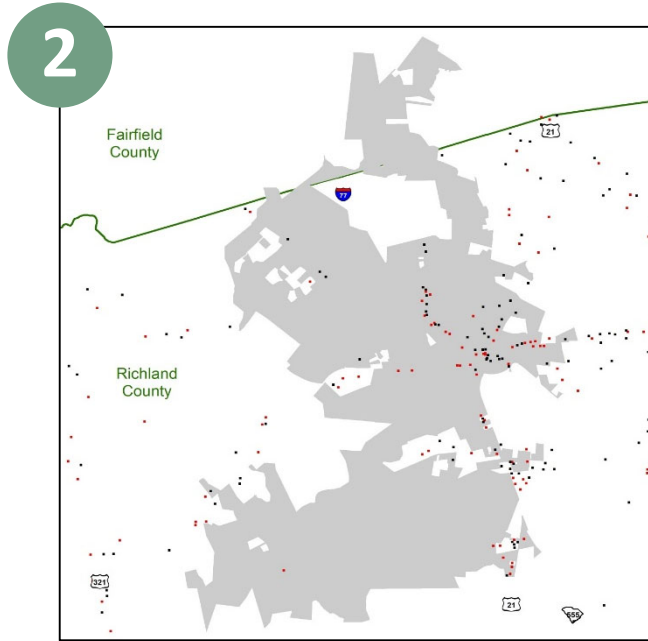
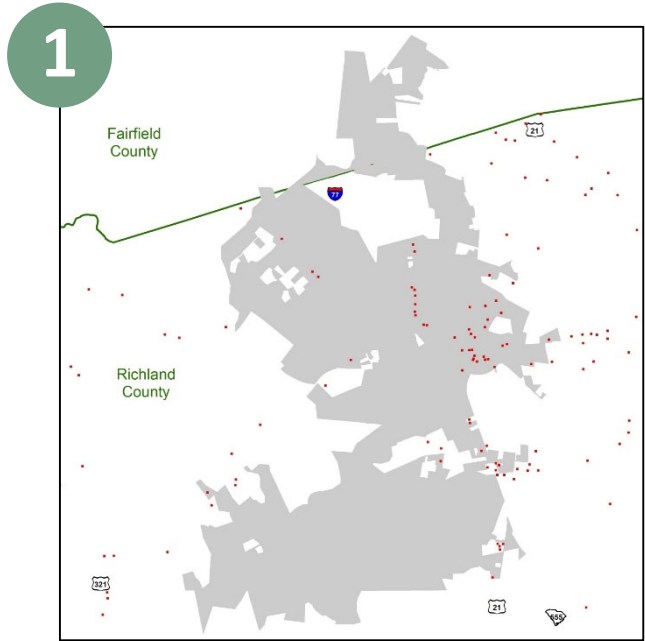




Map 4.2: Years Structures Built

- 1. Prior to 1950
- 2. 1950 - 1970
- 3. 1970 - 2000
- 4. 2000 - 2010
- 5. 2010 - 2018

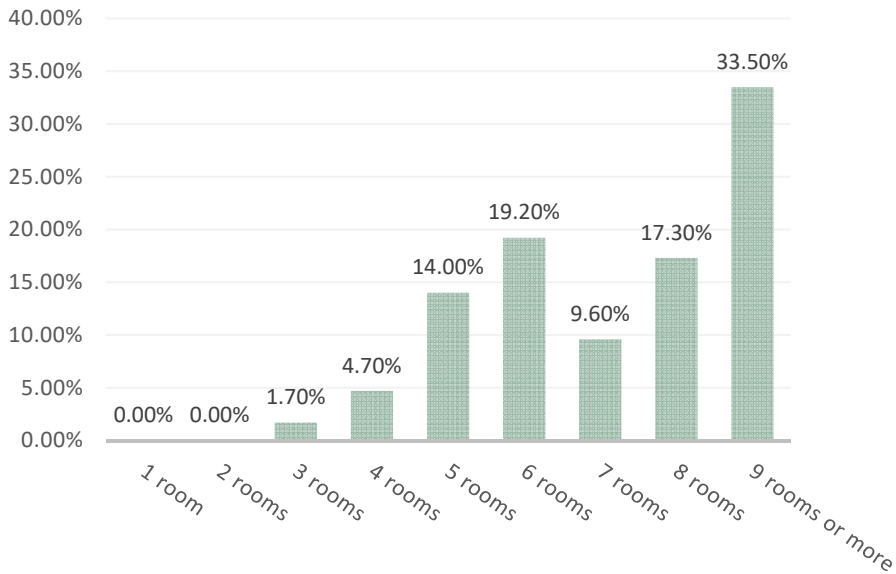
■ Built During Time Period  
 ■ Built in During Previous Time Period





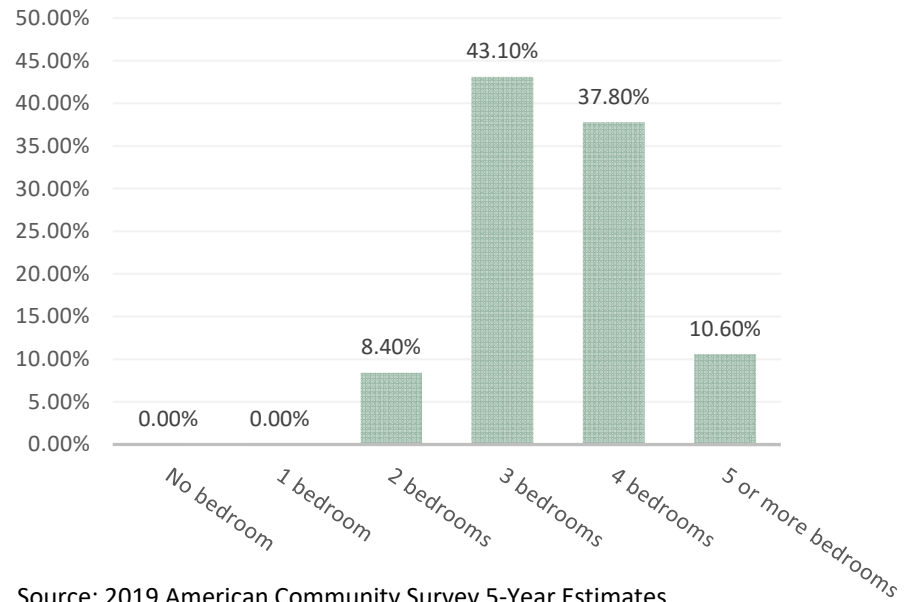
	1 Unit, Detached	Median # Rooms	Mobile Homes
<b>Blythewood</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>16.2%</b>

Figure 4.1: Number of Rooms in Housing Units



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 4.2: Number of Bedrooms in Housing Units



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## House Value

Based on the 2019 ACS Estimates, the median home value in Blythewood is \$284,900, which is \$122,300 more than the median home value of South Carolina. This number is also higher than Richland County and many surrounding jurisdictions. This is consistent with the relatively high median incomes of area residents. Over 65% of owner occupied units are valued at \$200,000 or more, with 37.5% being valued between \$300,00 and \$499,000.

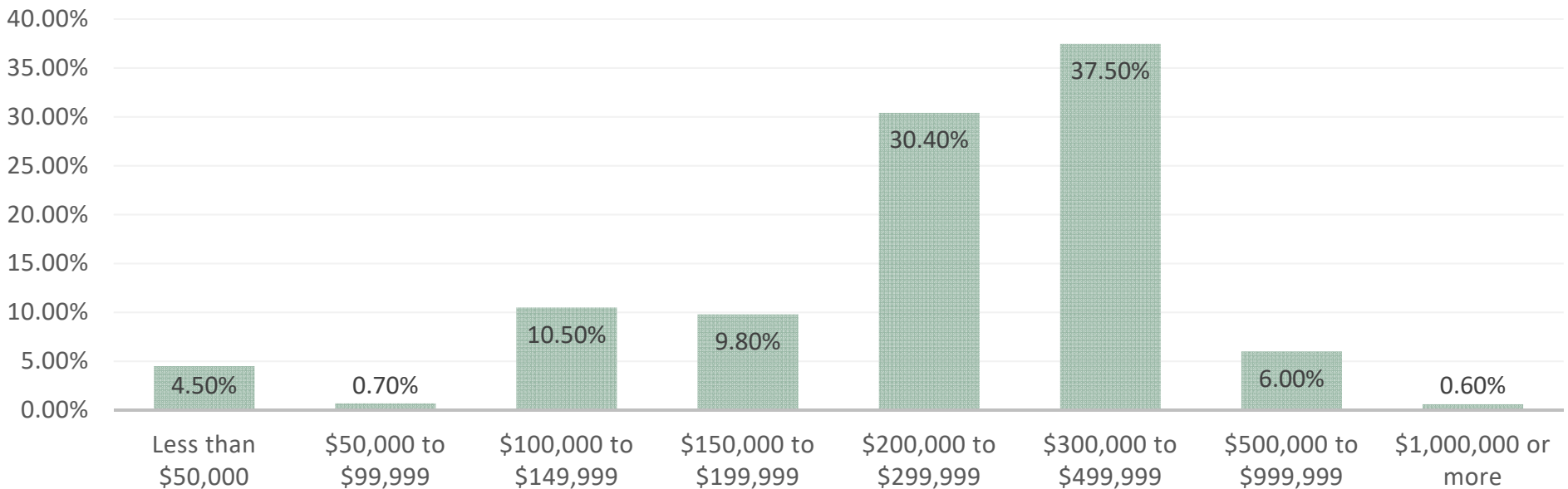
### Blythewood Median Home Value

# \$284,900

### South Carolina Median Home Value

# \$162,300

Figure 4.4: Value of Owner Occupied Units



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Occupancy and Tenure

Of the 1,760 housing units in the Town, 90% are occupied and 94% are owner occupied. These numbers are higher than South Carolina and surrounding communities. Because the owner occupancy rate is so high, vacancy rates for both homeowners and renters are relatively low.

## Affordability

Affordability is a key factor in the housing market. The cost of housing must be in sync with household incomes to meet future housing needs. Under HUD criteria, a housing unit is considered affordable if its gross cost does not exceed 30 percent of the occupants' income. Conversely, a household is considered cost burdened if its occupants are paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs.

The median monthly rent in Blythewood is \$1,792, which is almost \$1,000 greater than the SC median. Approximately 10% of renting households are cost burdened based on HUD criteria, with most of those paying 35% or more of their gross income on housing costs. Approximately 14% of homeowners with a mortgage are cost burdened based on HUD criteria. These numbers are significantly higher for Richland County, in which 51.8% of renters are cost burdened and 22% of homeowners are cost burdened. Despite the relatively low numbers for Blythewood, the high housing costs characteristic of the community means that housing in Blythewood is not accessible for many citizens. The Town should continue to work towards diversifying their housing stock and work with community partners to help identify and address regional affordable housing issues.

**Table 4.3: Summary of Housing Occupancy Characteristic**

	Occupied Housing Units	Owner Occupied Units	Homeowner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate	Average Household size of owner occupied units	Average Household size of renter occupied units
Blythewood	<b>90%</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>~0%</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>4.97</b>
South Carolina	<b>84%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>2.48</b>



**Blythewood  
Median Rent**

**\$1,792**

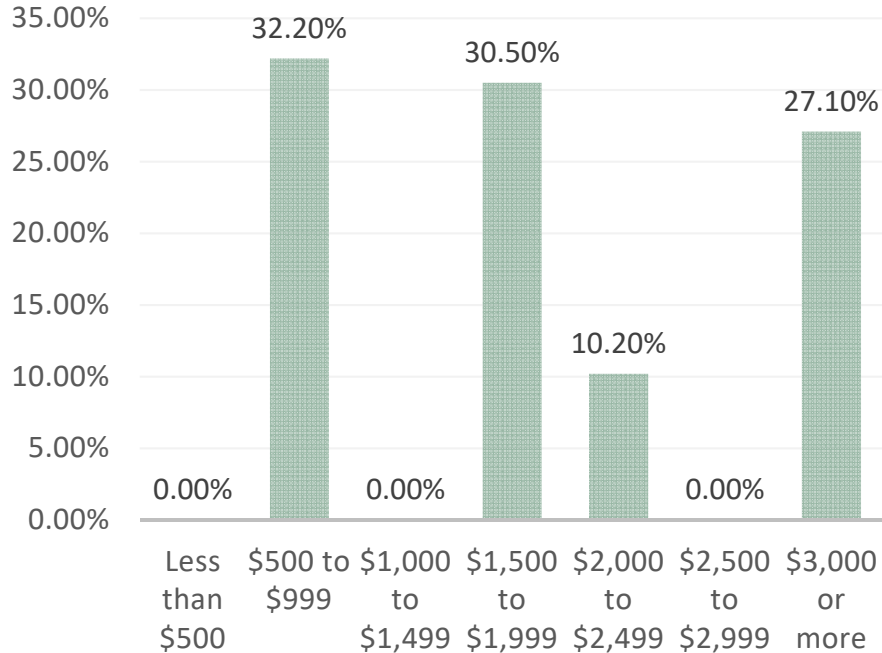
**South Carolina  
Median Rent**

**\$894**

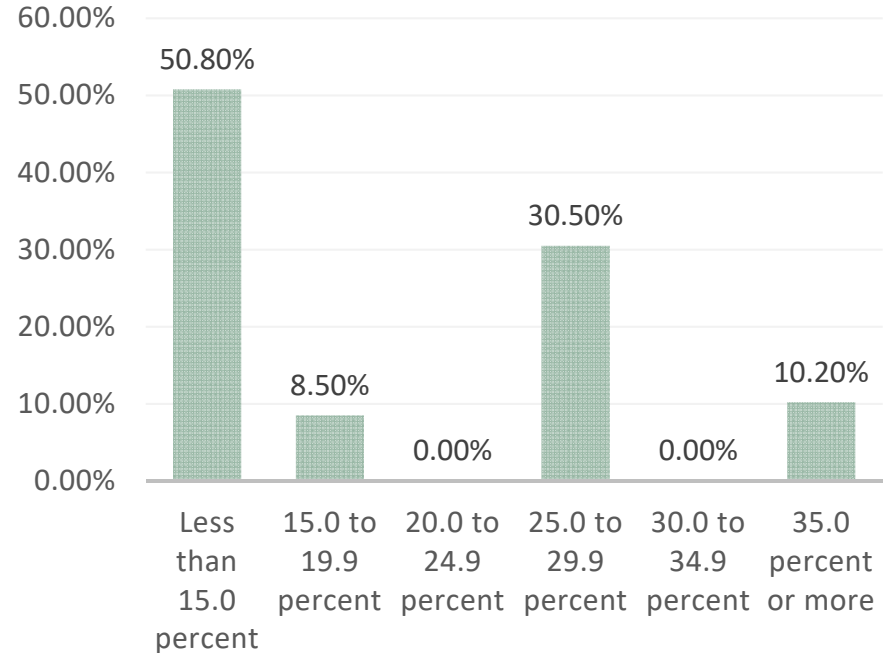
**Number of Occupied  
Units Paying Rent**

**~59**

**Figure 4.5: Gross Monthly Rent**



**Figure 4.6: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Income**





## Summary of Key Findings

- Average Household Size is 3.14 which is significantly higher than Richland County and South Carolina
- 94.4% of housing units are owner occupied which is significantly higher than the state and national average
- Housing is predominantly characterized by large, single-family detached housing units
- 5.9% of housing units are mobile homes
- Over 50% of housing units were built after the year 2000
- Median home value is \$284,900 which is \$122,600 > than SC
- Median monthly rent is almost \$1,000 greater than state median
- ~10% of renting households are cost burdened
- Housing development pressure within and outside municipal limits

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Housing Diversity.** The Town should work to ensure the zoning and land development ordinances allow for zoning that provides for a mix of uses, promotes housing diversity in type and price point, and strengthens residential design guidelines. The Town should also work to ensure the ordinances have strong accessibility standards and allow for “aging in place.”

**Richland County Coordination.** Because much of the new residential development impacting the Town is located in Richland County, the Town should continue coordinating closely with Richland County on development impacts and zoning compatibility for all new, proposed housing developments.

## GOAL #3

**Ensure an adequate and balanced supply of quality housing options are available and accessible to residents of all ages and incomes**

### Strategies:

- Identify opportunities for promoting a diversity of housing types in different zoning districts
- Support senior housing and “aging in place” by reviewing and updating the zoning ordinance as needed to strengthen accessibility standards and zoning compatibility
- Identify strategies for preserving existing neighborhood character and vitality
- Continue to promote mixed use developments in applicable districts, with specific consideration for the Town Center district
- Coordinate with Richland County on development impacts and zoning compatibility for new, proposed housing developments in unincorporated areas adjacent to the Town of Blythewood



# 5 Natural Resources





## Introduction

The natural resources element of the comprehensive plan provides an inventory of significant physical and biological features of the landscape including consideration of the physical setting, climate, water resources, and environmentally sensitive areas. The purpose is to provide a base from which to guide policy decisions that are related to the use and management of these natural resources, especially as they pertain to the need for protection, restoration, and/or impact the intensity and types of permissible land uses.

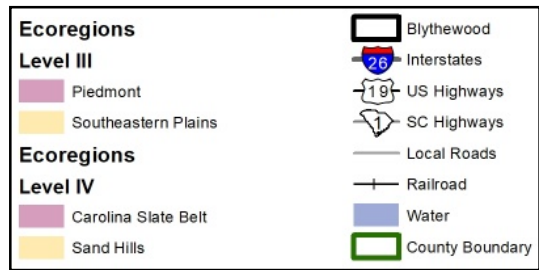
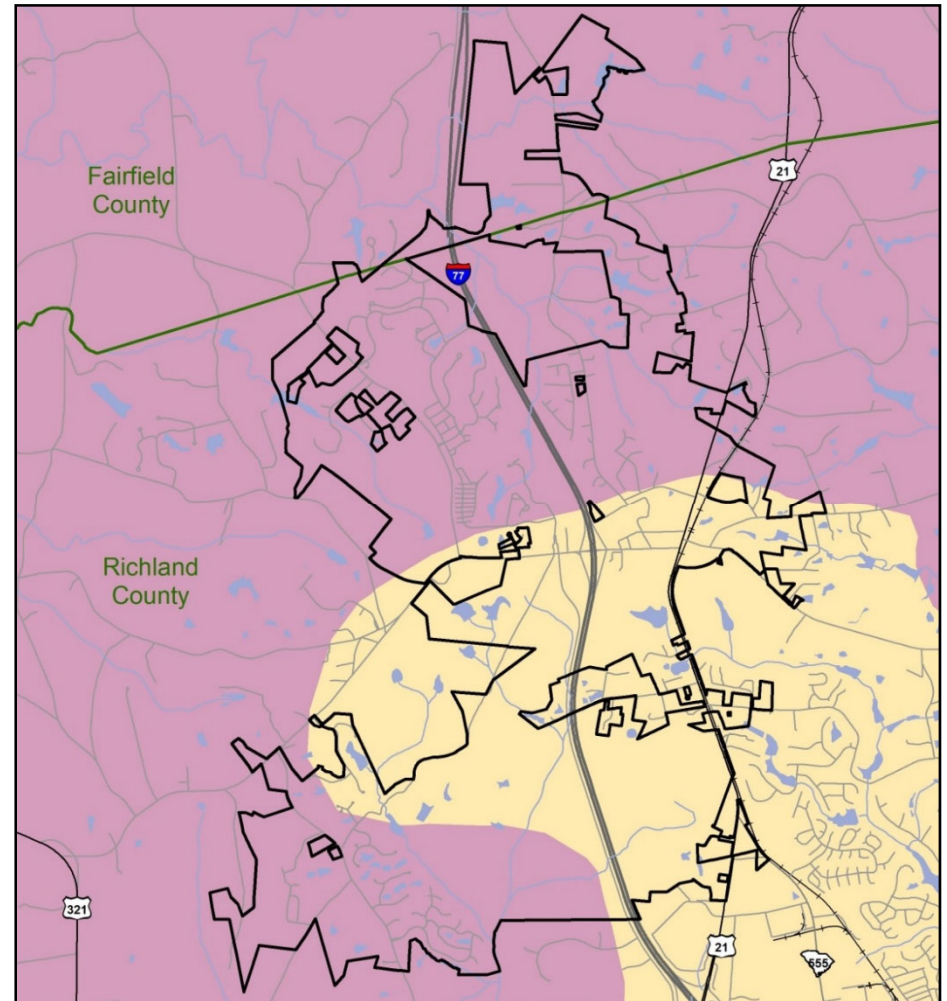
## Physical Setting

**Ecoregions.** Blythewood is located on the dividing line between the Southeaster Plains (Sandhills) and Piedmont (Carolina Slate Belt) ecoregions. Elevations in these ecoregions generally range from 100-250 feet with marginal to moderate slopes. They usually have a moderate to dense network of perennial streams and rivers and are characterized by well drained soils. The dominant forest types include southern mixed forests with pine dominating in the sandhills and oak-hickory-pine dominating in the piedmont.

**Soils.** Soil classes within these ecoregions generally include the Lakeland and Pelion-Johnston associations. The Lakeland association is the only one found in Blythewood. It consists of deep, gently sloping to strongly sloping, excessively drained soils which formed in sandy marine sediment. These soils have a dark gray sandy surface layer of up to 80 inches. Low water capacity and inherently low fertility for farming generally limit existing natural growth to woodlands. Prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance are present in significant quantities along riparian corridors.

Overall, the physical setting of Blythewood presents few development constraints, which is one reason why Blythewood continues to experience rapid residential growth.

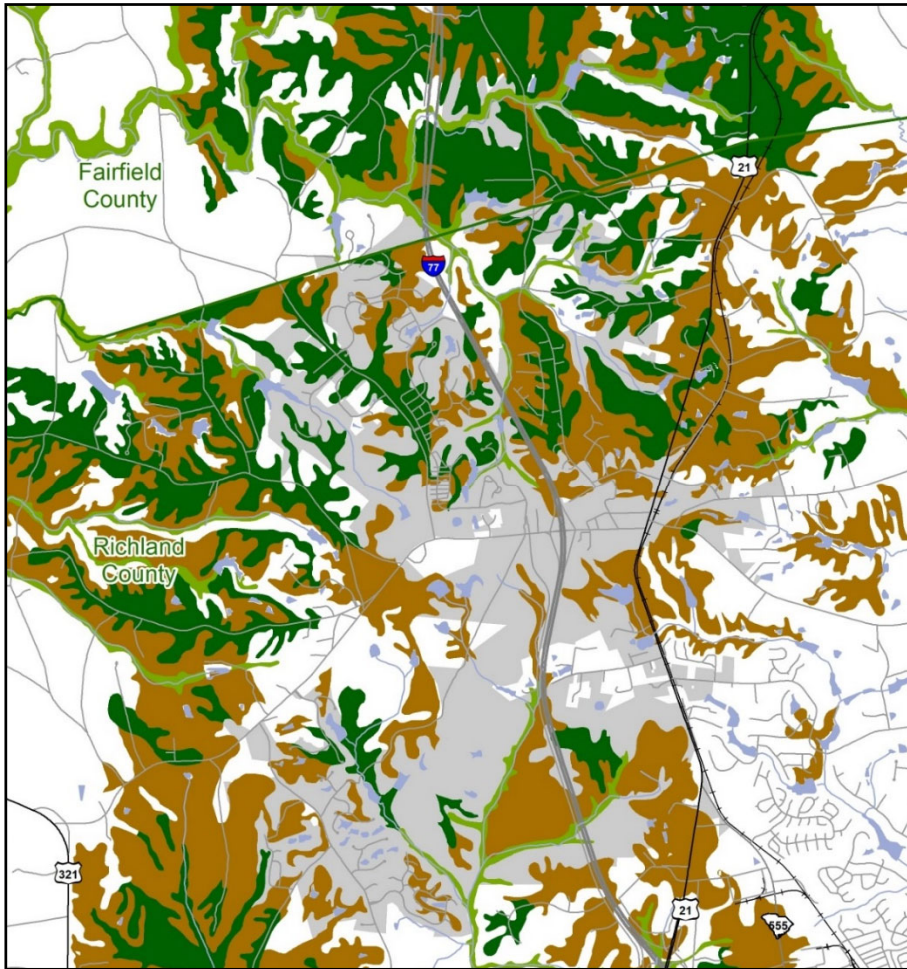
Map 5.1: Ecoregions



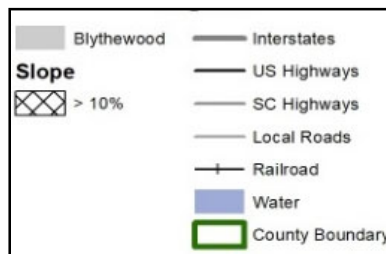
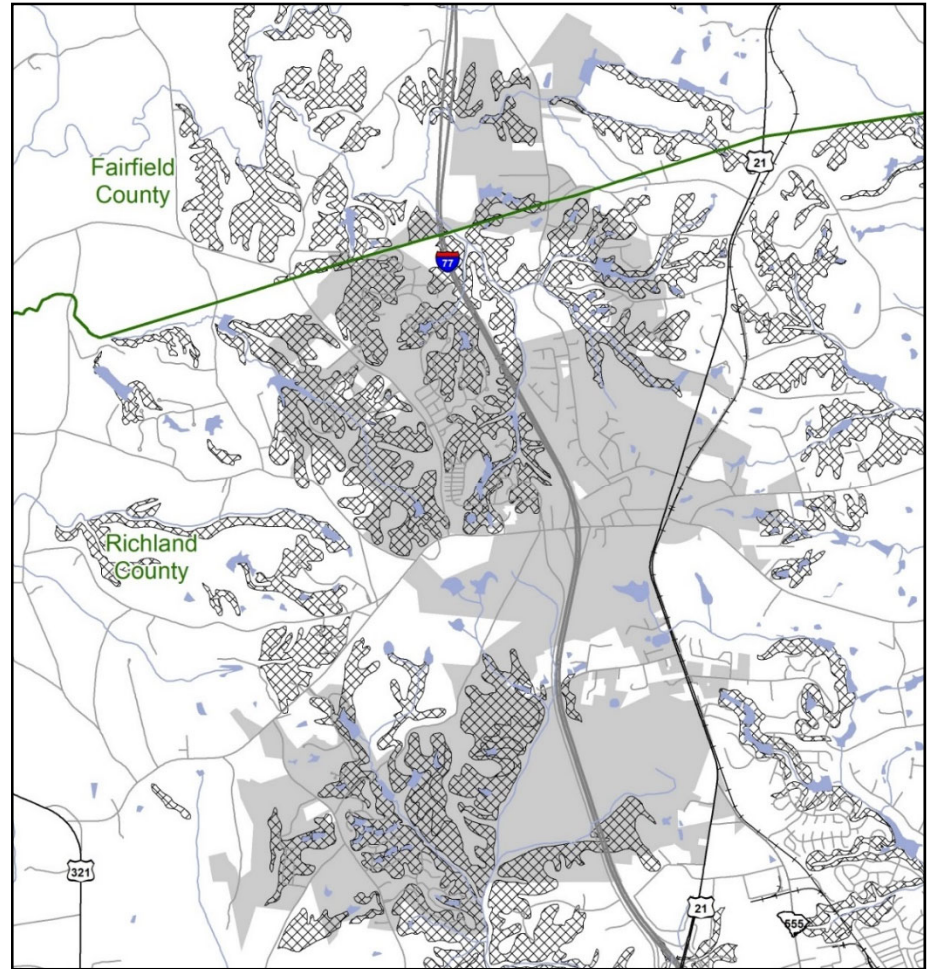




Map 5.2: Soils



Map 5.3: Slope





**Land Cover.** Based on the 2016 National Land Cover Database maintained by the US Geological Survey, the Blythewood area is over 50% forested and 28% developed. Other dominant land cover categories include 9% shrub and grassland, 6% cultivated crops, 2% open water, and less than 1% wetland areas. The percentage developed vs. undeveloped has likely increased substantially in the years since the 2016 database was developed. Such an increase will likely represent the transition from undeveloped, primarily forested land, to low density residential and commercial uses.

**Map 5.4: 2016 Land Cover**

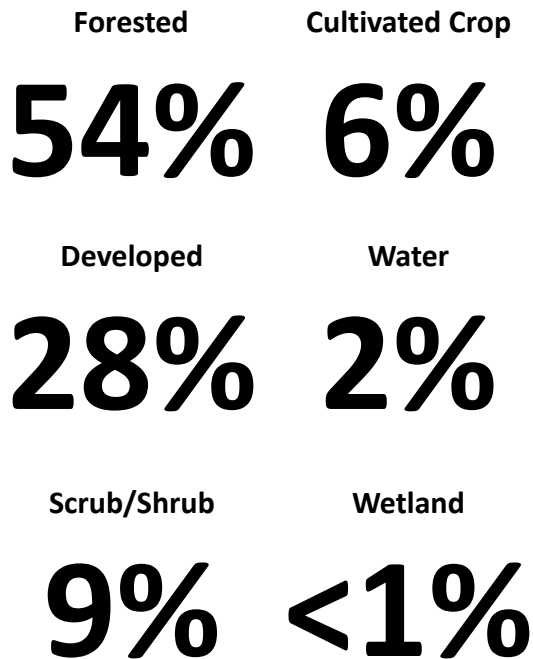
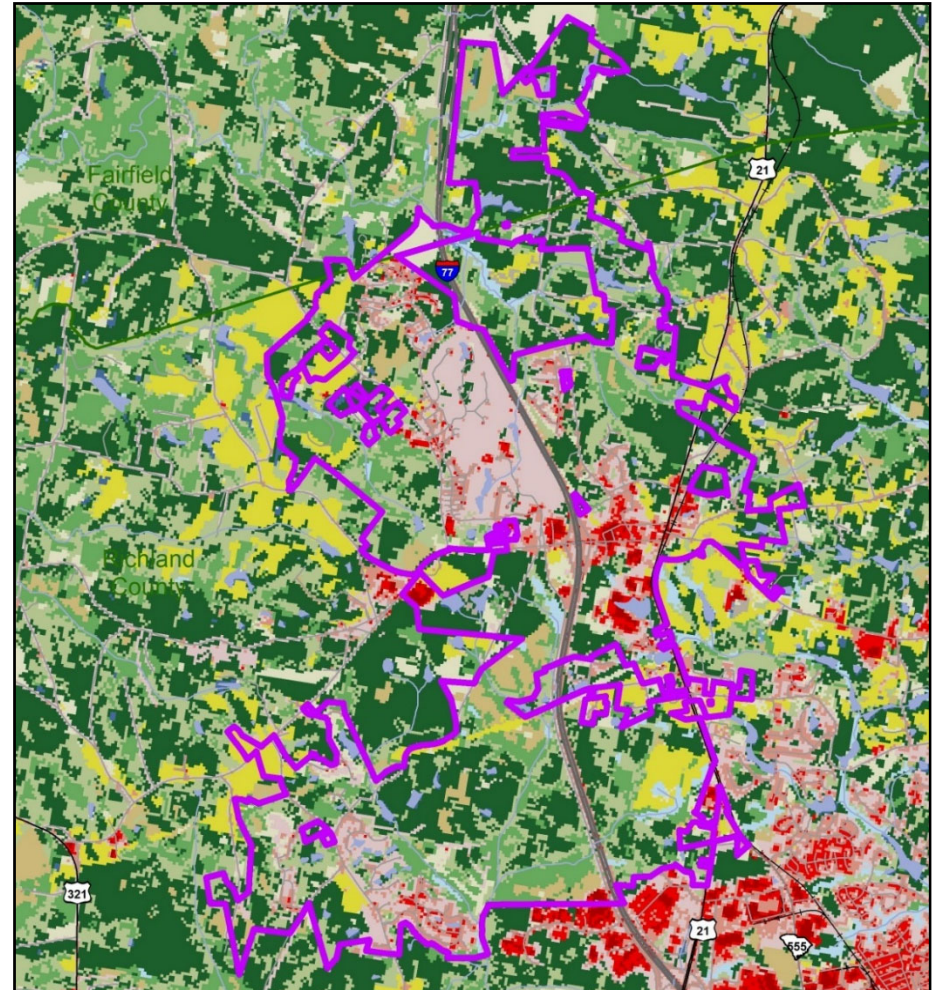
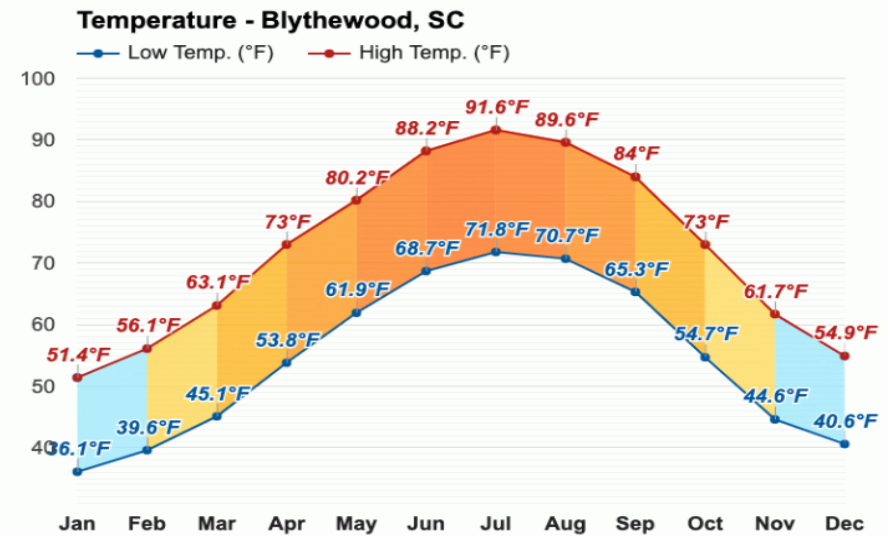




Figure 5.1: Average Temperature

Average temperature Blythewood, SC

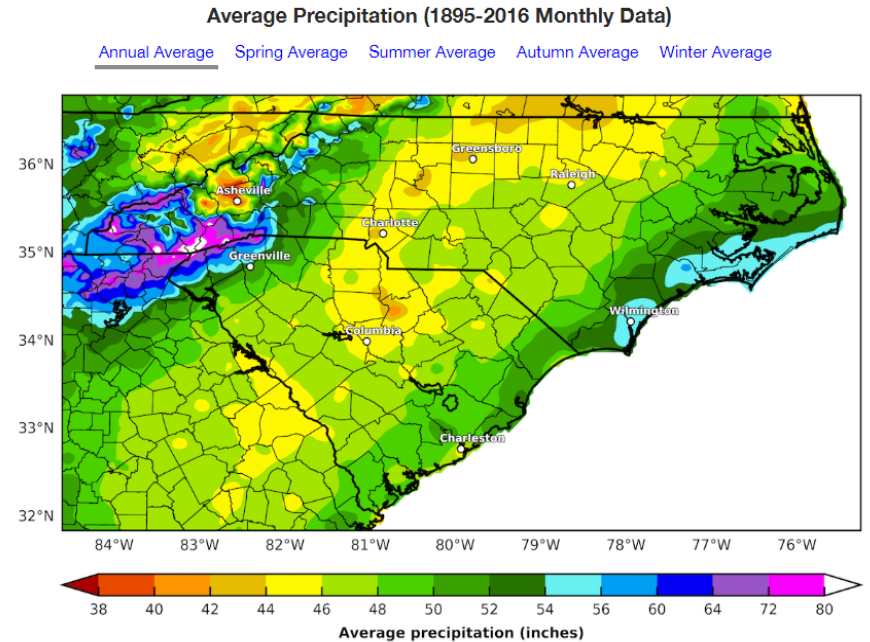


Source: www.weather-us.com

## Climate

The temperate climate provides hot and usually humid summers due to warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean. The winters are moderately cold but short, moderated by the Appalachian Mountains in the northwest that impede cold air movement from the north. As shown on Figure 5.1, the average January high temperature is 51.4°F and the average January low temperature is 36.1°F. The average July high temperature is 91.6°F and the average July low temperature is 71.8°F.

Figure 5.2: Average Precipitation



Source: Southeast Regional Climate Center; Data Source: PRISM  
Website: <https://www.cisa.sc.edu/atlas/carolinas-precip-map.html>

As shown in Figure 5.2, the total average annual precipitation for the Blythewood area is between 44 and 46 inches. Precipitation totals are generally evenly distributed among the seasons. Prevailing winds are from the southwest with an average wind speed of nine miles per hour.



## Water Resources

**Watersheds.** The Town of Blythewood is split between the Broad and Catawba-Wateree River Basins, which are two of the primary river basins draining the state of South Carolina. Each of these basins can then be subdivided into three sub-watersheds which drain the Blythewood area. These sub-basins include Cedar Creek (Broad Basin), the Lower Broad (Broad Basin), and Twenty-Five Mile Creek (Catawba – Wateree Basin).

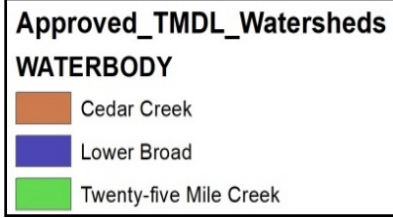
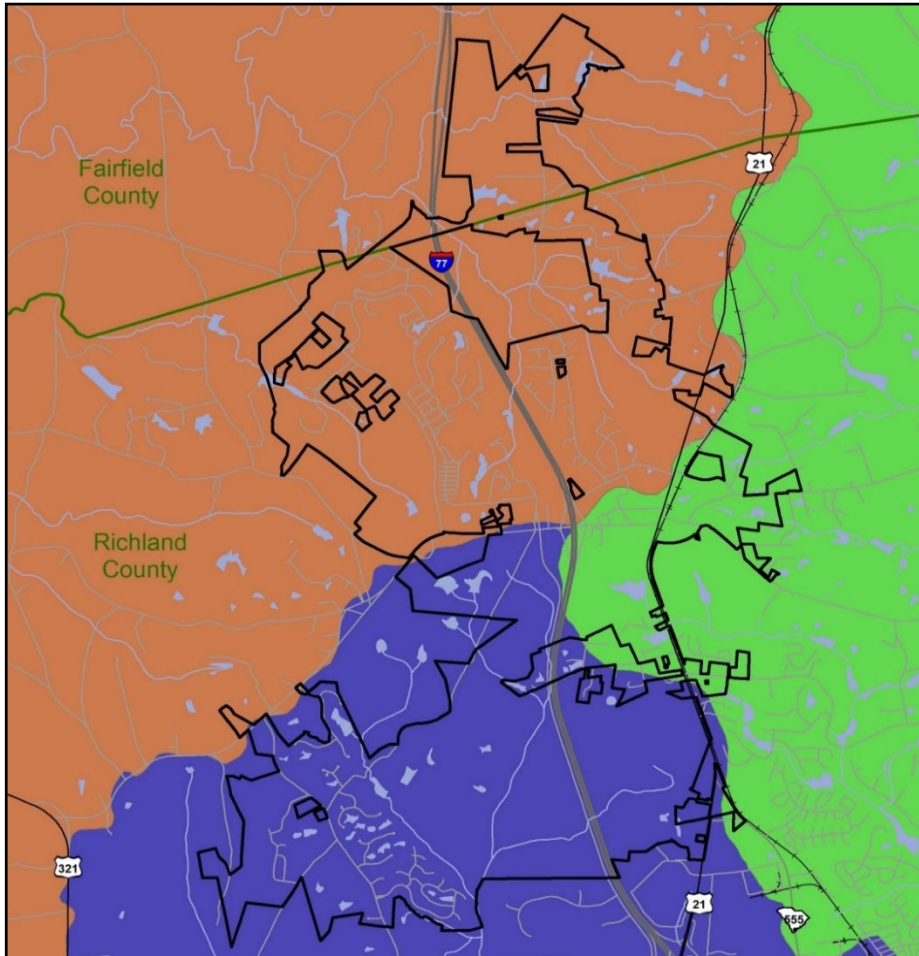
**Water Quality.** The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) maintains a list of impaired water bodies under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Currently, each of the sub-watersheds discussed above is impaired for bacteria and biological factors. Because of these impairments, the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control has approved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) restrictions for these waterbodies which theoretically places limits on the amount of pollutants that can impact the waterbody, thus creating regulatory restrictions for point and non-point source surface water discharge permits. In the past, the Town of Blythewood participated in the development of a watershed based plan for the Twenty-Five Mile Creek Watershed. This plan identified the likely sources of pollutants impacting the waterbody and recommended a number of best management practices for adoption by local governments, residents, and utility providers.

**Wetlands and Floodplains.** Wetlands within the Town are primarily located in the lowland riparian areas with little to no slope and poorly drained soils. Wetland areas within the Town are contiguous with the floodplains that buffer a number of the smaller creeks and streams surrounding the Town. As shown on Map 5.4, most of these areas are concentrated along Boney Creek-Big Cedar Creek to the north, Crane Creek to the Southwest, and Rice Creek to the Southeast. The central area of Blythewood is not as heavily impacted by flooding as are these areas on the periphery of the Town.

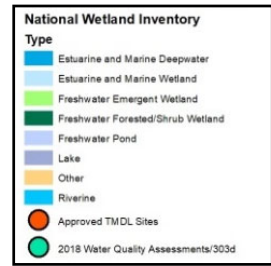
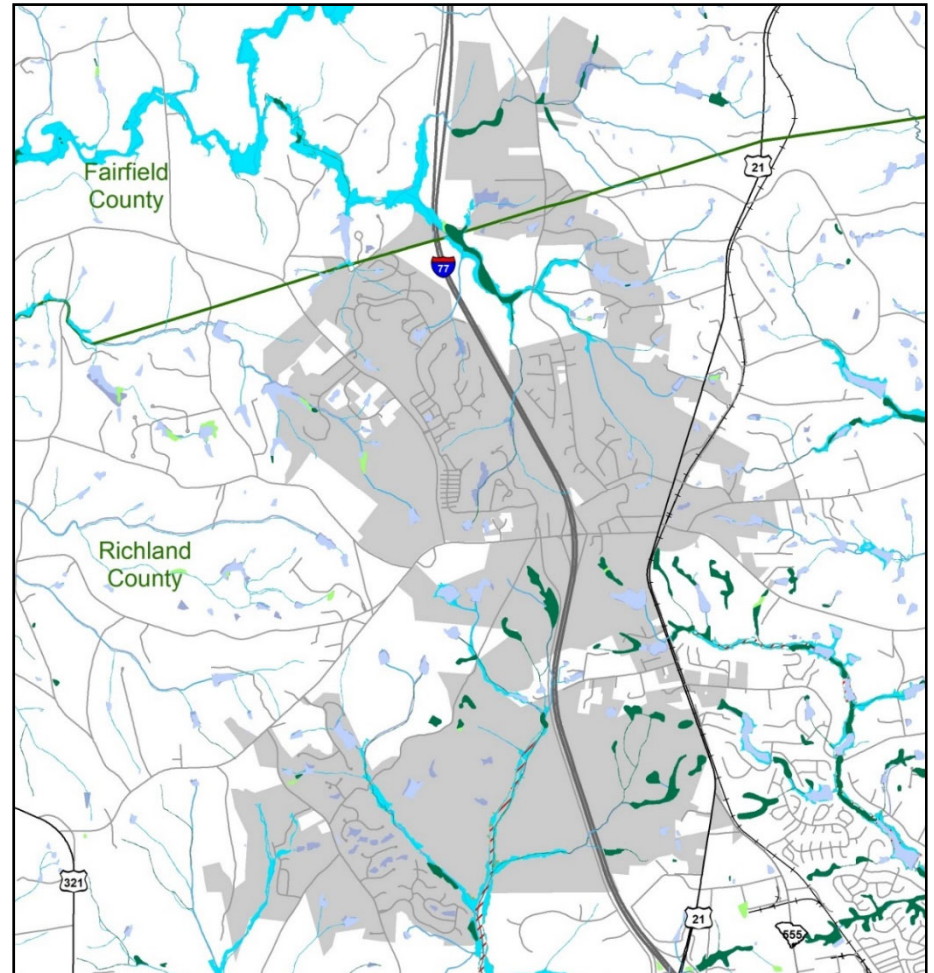
Prior to annexations over the past several decades, there were very few areas in the Town that were susceptible to flood damage based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. However, as the town annexed property that was susceptible to flooding, it became important for the town to implement floodplain management standards. As a result, the Town became a member of the National Flood Insurance Program and adopted flood mitigation regulations. Additionally the town's zoning ordinance includes floodplain and floodway overlay districts. Because of the limited development potential of these areas, they can provide a useful framework for developing a local and regional trail and open space network. Preservation of these riparian corridors also provides water quality protection benefits.



Map 5.5: Watershed and TMDL Boundaries



Map 5.6: Floodplains and Wetlands





## Summary of Key Findings

- Blythewood is located on the edge of the piedmont and southeaster plains eco-regions
- Natural resources do not present development constraints
- Blythewood is surrounded by prime farmland soils
- 28% of the Town's land area is developed and 54% is forest land
- Blythewood is split between the Broad and Catawba-Wateree River Basins
- All sub-watersheds are impaired and have DHEC approved TMDLs
- Urban stormwater runoff and other causes of non-point source pollution are contributing to water quality impairments
- Flood zones and wetland areas located along riparian corridors on the northern and southern edges of the Town
- Opportunities for trails and open space preservation

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Water Quality.** Water quality is an ongoing issue for the Blythewood area of northeastern Richland County. These issues will continue to get worse as development pressures continue. The Town should continue to work with Richland and other non-governmental partners to update and implement recommendations from the Twenty-Five Mile Creek Watershed Based Plan. The Town should also evaluate opportunities for promoting riparian buffer preservation in all new proposed developments.

**Open Space Preservation.** The Town should work with community partners to identify opportunities for working land and open space preservation, such as the 100 acre conservation easement that was implemented at Camp Discovery an important natural and educational resource located just outside of Blythewood.

## GOAL #4

## Protect, preserve, and promote Blythewood's natural and cultural resources

### Strategies:

- Develop open space protection standards and incentives
- Evaluate/strengthen stream buffer standards
- Preserve agriculture and forestry "working lands"
- Develop an area-wide trail/greenway plan to include development of a prioritized project list and identification of potential funding opportunities
- Engage with partners in watershed based planning initiatives for Twenty Five Mile Creek and other impaired watersheds



# 6 Cultural Resources





## Introduction

Blythewood’s cultural resources add to the quality of life for its citizens and visitors. Cultural resources also define what is unique to the Town and give the community a sense of place and a connection with its past. This element of the comprehensive plan explores the Town’s historic resources, arts and cultural events, and cultural, religious, and civic organizations.

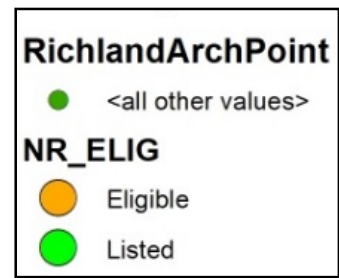
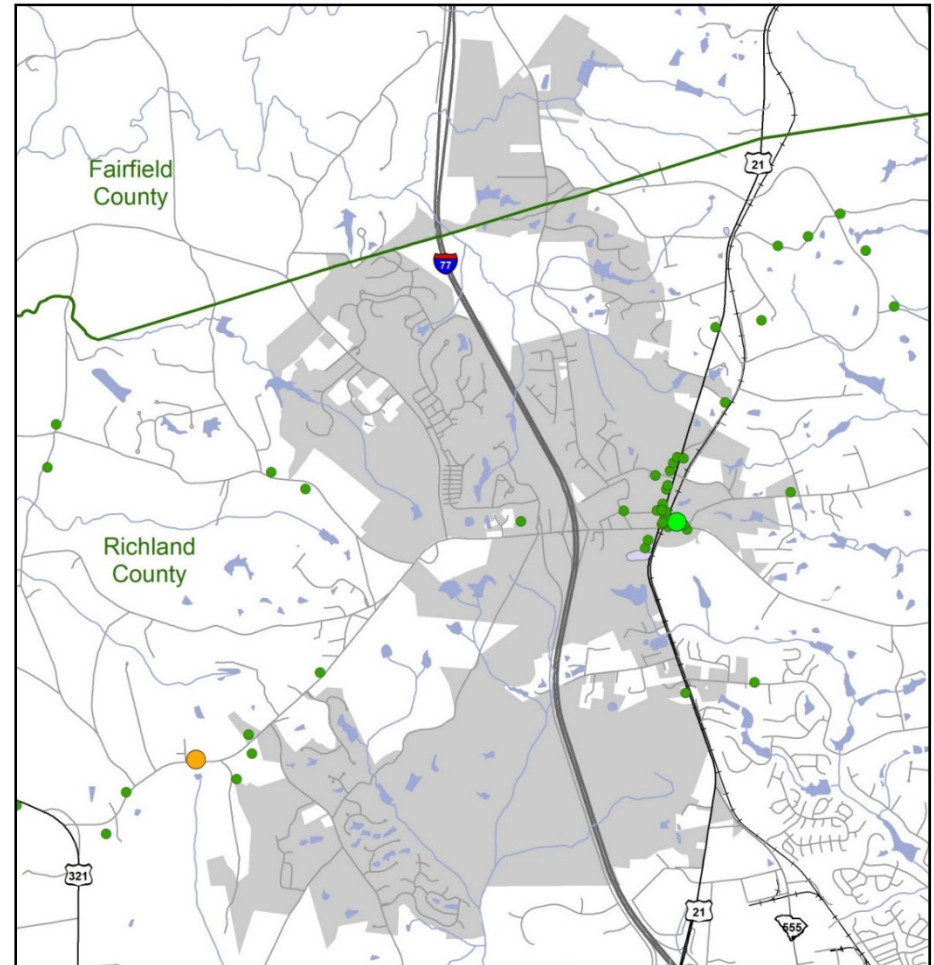
## Historical Background

The original settlement had its beginnings near the only railroad depot in this part of the county and was named Doko, an Indian name meaning "watering place." This essentially was the depot's purpose since steam engines stopped here to take on fuel and water. The Town of Blythewood acquired its name through the establishment of the Blythewood Female Institute in 1860. Established one mile west of the Doko depot by Dr. S. W. Bookhart, the institute took its name from the surrounding landscape. The local citizens, taking a liking to the name, adopted it as the name of the village in 1877.

On December 24, 1879, by Act of the South Carolina General Assembly, the village was incorporated as the Town of Blythewood. Boundaries were drawn to make a circle one-quarter mile around with the train depot as the center for a total of 126 acres. A November 24, 1875 plat of Doko shows that roads were laid out west of the railroad and given names representing those families settling in the area. There are no records of elections during this period. Blythewood was a part of Fairfield County until 1913, but by vote of its citizens, joined Richland County. For almost 100 years the Town had no formal governmental structure.

Some residents became dissatisfied with what they perceived to be inadequate representation and on February 15, 1974 were able to get then Governor John C. West to reenact the Town Charter of 1879.

Map 6.1: Cultural Resources







It was not until March 26, 1974 that the first elections were held to elect the first Mayor and council members.

The railroad was the lifeline of the village during the early years; cotton and other products from the local farms and plantations were shipped from the depot. There had been settlers in the area for some time, but it was the depot and turn-out (side track for loading and unloading) which was the catalyst for the Town's development. The railroad, originally known as the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad, was built in the 1850's, with the first route from Charlotte to Columbia. In 1888 the railroad became the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company, and was later purchased and operated by Southern Railway Company in 1900. The current owner is Norfolk Southern Railroad. The depot served Blythewood for 98 years until it was discontinued and demolished on June 30, 1968.

## Historic Sites

The area in and around Blythewood is rich in historical resources; however, there are only a few historically significant structures within the Town limits. The Town has adopted historic preservation guidelines to help identify and preserve historic structures. The Town of Blythewood Board of Architectural Review will be monitoring the status of structures for inclusion on the list of historically significant structures. Table 6.1 shows the initial list of historically significant sites developed under the historic preservation guidelines.

The Blythewood Historical Society was founded in 2010 to help protect, nurture and support the historical, pre-historical and cultural heritage of Blythewood through preservation, advocacy and education. One of their accomplishments includes the development of a historic site walking tour of the area.

## Cultural Arts

Complementing the commitment to historic preservation, the Town of Blythewood also has a thriving cultural arts community as evidenced by the Blythewood Artists Guild, also known as Bravo! Blythewood. Bravo! Blythewood is an organization committed to cultivating the artistic talents of Blythewood and the surrounding community through events, education, promotions, advocacy, and support. The organization's goal is to provide a unifying element for all artists in order to foster, develop, and grow the local artist community. Bravo! Blythewood is also committed to cultivating the talent and energy of some of the areas youngest residents through a partnership with Richland School District Two. In conjunction with the "Arts in Education" program, Bravo! Blythewood works with young artists and students in order to educate, promote, and display their work so that they may grow as artists, students, and citizens.

Another important organization contributing to the development of the cultural arts in Blythewood is the Doko Meadows Park Foundation. They are a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to secure public and private funding for the benefit of the community, with a focus on enhancements to Doko Meadows Park, which in recent years has helped to position Blythewood as a regional activity center and event destination. The Doko Meadows Park Foundation was started in 2015, and in that time has secured funding for development of the amphitheater. The organization is currently working on funding for the development of permanent enclosed space at the popular farmers market.

Additional cultural organizations, as well as a list of festivals and events are inventoried in Table 6.1.



**Table 6.1: Cultural Resources**

Historic Sites and Structures	Organizations/Institutions/Facilities	Cultural Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bethel Baptist Sanctuary and Cemetery</li> <li>• Bethel School</li> <li>• Sandy Level Baptist Sanctuary and Cemetery</li> <li>• George Peter Hoffman House</li> <li>• Boney/Hykil House</li> <li>• Old Post Office/Wilson 5,10, 25</li> <li>• St. Marks Lutheran Sanctuary and Cemetery</li> <li>• Langford/Wilson Community Store</li> <li>• DeSto and Sister Building</li> <li>• Blythewood School</li> <li>• Wooten Procter House</li> <li>• Bookhart/Blume House</li> <li>• Clara Martin Sandwich Shop</li> <li>• Tom/Tally Boney Barn and Milk Shed</li> <li>• Lanford/Nord House</li> <li>• Langford/Wilson House</li> <li>• Town Park Archeological Site</li> <li>• Jeffares-Creech House</li> <li>• Trinity United Methodist</li> <li>• Nature Trail at Doko Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blythewood Historical Society and Museum</li> <li>• Greater Blythewood Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Blythewood Artists Guild/Bravo Blythewood</li> <li>• Richland County Conservation Commission</li> <li>• Blythewood Manor/Doko Meadows</li> <li>• Amphitheater</li> <li>• Veterans Monument/Park (Strategic Plan)</li> <li>• Multi-cultural civic center (Strategic Plan)</li> <li>• Visitors Center (Strategic Plan)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doko Meadows Music in the Park/Doko Fest</li> <li>• Oktoberfest</li> <li>• Blythewood Farmers/Artisan Market</li> <li>• Richland County Ag and Art Tour</li> <li>• Golf Tournaments</li> <li>• Blythewood Rodeo</li> <li>• Doko Ribfest</li> <li>• Seasonal Activities (e.g., Christmas Parade)</li> <li>• Historic Blythewood Self-Guided Walking Tour</li> </ul>



## Summary of Key Findings

- Blythewood has an abundance of historic and cultural resources
- Blythewood Historical Society and Museum has documented a number of important sites throughout town and developed a self-guided historic site walking tour
- Opportunities exist for expanding documentation, interpretation, and promotion of local historic sites and landmarks
- Blythewood has a large number of active institutional and civic organizations that contribute to the Town's civic and community culture
- Blythewood hosts a number of cultural events and festivals throughout the year

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Cultural Resources as a Community Asset.** The Town is becoming known locally and regionally for its extensive arts and cultural events programming and facilities, such as Doko Manor and Park. The Town should continue to recognize and leverage these facilities as community assets that have the potential to help position the Town as a regional activity center and events destination. The Town should continue to work with organizations such as Bravo! Blythewood and the Doko Meadows Park Foundation to grow and market these community assets.

## GOAL #4

**Protect, preserve, and promote Blythewood's natural and cultural resources**

### Strategies:

- Develop a multi-cultural events/civic center
- Promote diversity and inclusion in local history and heritage preservation to include documenting local African American history and landmarks
- Work with local and state partners to establish historical markers and expand local history education and outreach
- Plan/host regularly scheduled regional/local events and activities



# 7 Transportation





## Introduction

When the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (the Planning Act) was first passed, transportation issues were addressed within the community facilities element of the comprehensive plan. In 2007, the SC Legislature passed the Priority Investment Act (PIA), which amended the Planning Act to require a separate multi-modal transportation element to inventory and analyze issues impacting the local transportation network. The PIA stipulates that this analysis must assess the needs for major road improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail, and transit; and be developed in accordance with the land use element to ensure compatibility and coordination between transportation priorities and existing and future land use policies.

## Road Network

By far, the most important highway running through the Town is I-77. It provides a reduced drive time to Columbia and the surrounding communities, but also provides direct access to Charlotte, as well as I-20, and I-26. For those traveling from Charlotte, the Blythewood interchange is the first significant interchange in almost 50 miles.

U.S. 21, which parallels I-77, is a major thoroughfare for local traffic, and provides an alternate route to Columbia. Blythewood road serves as a connector between I-77 and U.S. 21, and as a result, has become the commercial corridor for the Town. Previous improvements to Blythewood Road include sidewalks, a traffic light at Boney Road and intersection improvements at Highway 21 to help with traffic generated by the new Blythewood High School.

One of the principle characteristics of the downtown area of Blythewood is the limited grid network of roads. A well defined grid network typical eases congestion by providing multiple routes from one point to another, but also fosters alternative modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling. While I-77 and the railroad limit the connections that can be made to this grid, as development continues to occur outside of the downtown area, connections to this grid should be encouraged when feasible.

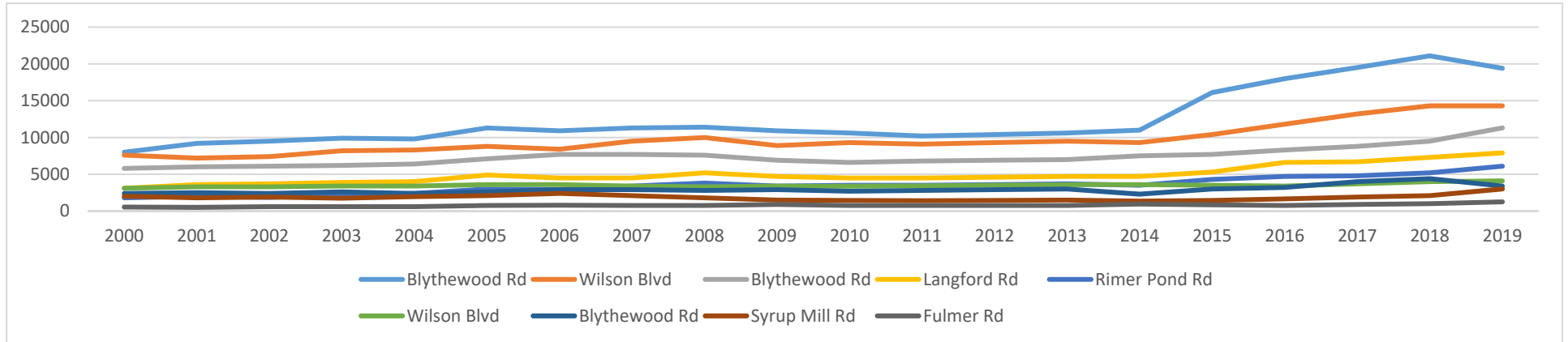
## Traffic Volumes

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts are collected annually by SCDOT and provide the best way to measure growth in traffic volumes over multiple years. This data is also used by SCDOT, COATS, and Richland County to help make funding decisions for costly capital improvement projects. Table 7.1, Figure 7.1, and Map 7.2 show growth in traffic volumes in the Blythewood area over the last two decades.

Blythewood Road, Wilson Boulevard, Langford Road, and Rimer Pond Road all show substantial growth in traffic volumes over this time period. This level of traffic growth can be attributed to the rapid residential growth in this area which puts additional cars on the road every year. Traffic impacts of growth are some of the biggest concerns expressed by Blythewood residents in the public survey. Increased congestion for both commuting and local trips can negatively impact the overall quality of life of a community for many residents.



**Figure 7.1: Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) 2000-2019**



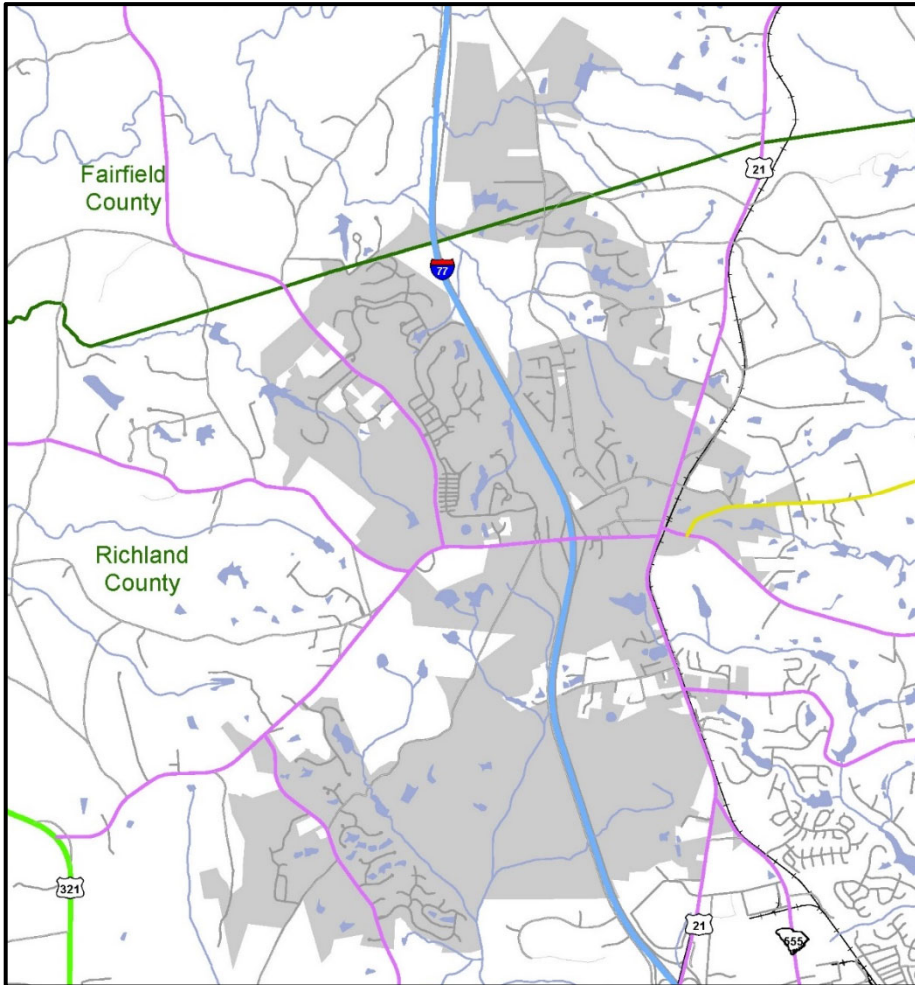
**Table 7.1: Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) 2000-2019**

Station	Description	Length	2000	2019	% Change 2000-2019	2030	2050	% Change 2019-2050
I-77	S- 52 (KILLIAN RD) TO US 21 (WILSON BLVD)	2.67	43,300	66,300	53.12%	82,745	110,755	67.05%
I-77	US 21 (WILSON BLVD) TO S- 59 (BLYTHEWOOD RD)	3.11	36,100	53,200	47.37%	69,735	93,673	76.08%
I-77	S- 59 (BLYTHEWOOD RD) (RICHLAND) TO S- 30 (E PEACH RD)	6.72	32,100	46,300	44.24%	59,787	79,232	71.13%
BLYTHEWOOD RD	US 21 (MAIN ST) TO I- 77 (INTERSTATE 77)	0.54	8,000	19,400	142.50%	22,676	32,515	67.60%
WILSON BLVD	S- 2885 (UNNAMED ST), S- 2886 TO S- 59 (BLYTHEWOOD RD)	3.46	7,600	14,300	88.16%	15,276	20,639	44.33%
BLYTHEWOOD RD	I- 77 (INTERSTATE 77) TO S- 2200 (BLYTHEWOOD RD)	1.17	5,800	11,300	94.83%	10,971	14,522	28.51%
LANGFORD RD	US 21 (MAIN ST) TO County Line - KERSHAW	7.48	3,100	7,900	154.84%	8,441	11,817	49.58%
Rimer Pond Rd / Kelly Mill Rd	County Line - KERSHAW TO US 21 (WILSON BLVD)	6.53	1,800	6,100	238.89%	6,917	10,251	68.05%
WILSON BLVD	S- 59 (BLYTHEWOOD RD) TO County Line - FAIRFIELD	2.77	3,100	4,100	32.26%	4,062	4,613	12.50%
BLYTHEWOOD RD	US 321 (WINNSBORO RD) TO S- 59 (BLYTHEWOOD RD)	3.11	2,400	3,400	41.67%	4,502	6,073	78.62%
SYRUP MILL RD	S- 59 (BLYTHEWOOD RD) TO County Line - FAIRFIELD	2.13	2,000	3,000	50.00%	2,287	2,770	-7.66%
FULMER RD	S- 2200 (BLYTHEWOOD RD) TO US 21 (WILSON BLVD)	4.53	550	1,250	127.27%	1,243	1,698	35.83%

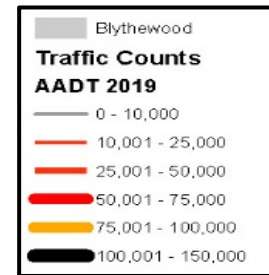
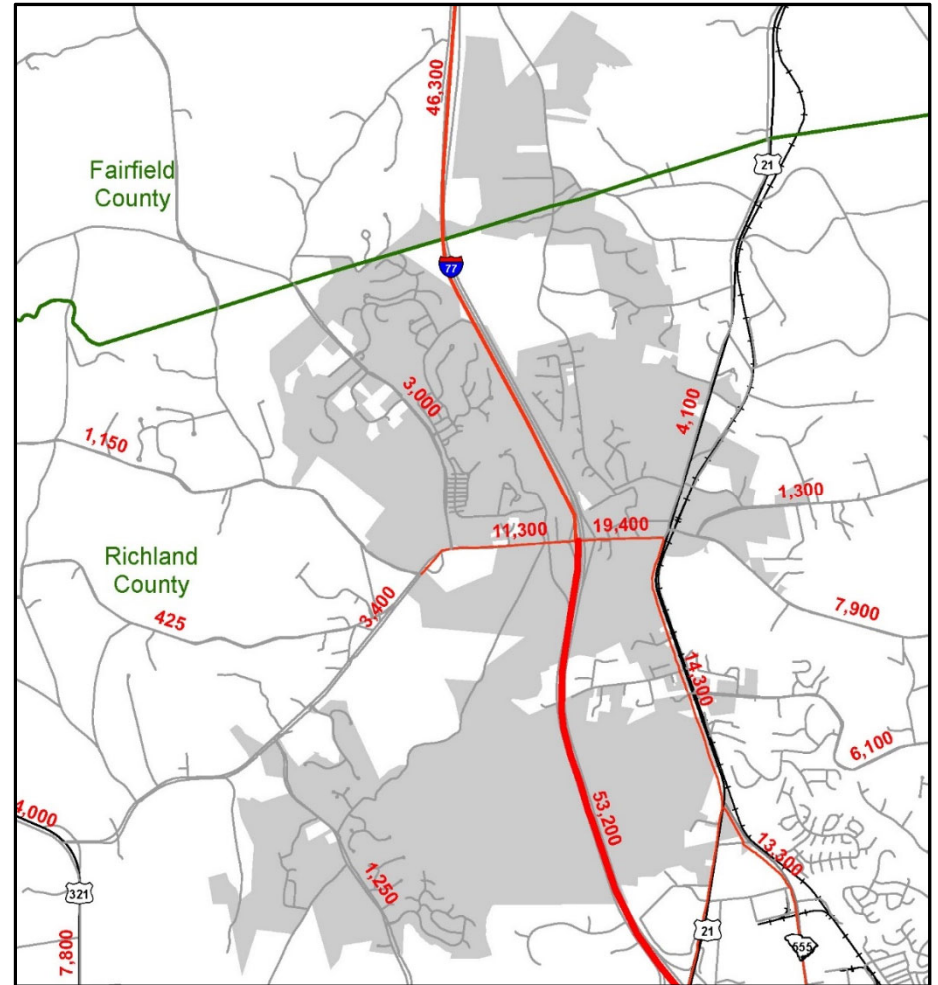
Source: SCDOT, Central Midlands Council of Governments



Map 7.1: SCDOT Functional Classification



Map 7.2: Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (AADT)





## Road Improvements

Because of the high capital costs, most local governments must depend on federal and state government programs for funding road improvement projects. The primary sources of transportation funding for Blythewood consist of federal funds that pass through the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) which serves as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization; and Richland County, which administers SCDOT country transportation funds (C-Funds). Both of these programs have provided funding for projects that benefit the Blythewood area. The level of funding, however, is not nearly sufficient to meet all of the transportation needs in the region. To help address this funding shortfall, in November 2012, the voters of Richland County approved a 1 cent transportation sales tax giving the County a dedicated funding source for transportation projects.

Included in the initial list of projects was the widening of Blythewood Road between I-77 and Winnsboro Road for a total distance of 4.2 miles (to be completed in two phases) and a total projected project cost of \$29 million. After further analysis the Town of Blythewood decided to change the scope of this road widening project to better reflect local transportation needs. The new proposal recommended Blythewood Road only be widened from I-77 to Fulmer Road, a total distance of 2.6 miles. The costs savings would then be used to improve traffic circulation and connectivity around the town center by enhancing McNulty Road, constructing the Creech Road/Main Street Connector, and adding two traffic circles at Cobblestone and Creech Roads. This new project proposal was approved by Blythewood Town Council (Town Resolution # 2014.005) and submitted to the Richland County Penny Tax Program for consideration. The proposal was accepted and adopted by Richland County Council on March 17, 2015. The order of priority was then further refined by Town Council via ordinance in 2019, placing the McNulty Road improvement as the highest priority, with Creech Road, Blythewood Road, and Syrup Mill Road following in order.

A summary of planned road improvement projects from COATS MPO and the Richland County Transportation Program is provided below.

### COATS MPO Projects

**Wilson Boulevard.** This project extends from Raines Road to Langford Road. The project is not on the COATS cost constrained list which means it is not currently programmed for funding. The estimated cost for this project is \$528.5 million.

**Blythewood Road.** This project extends from Blythewood Road from Muller Road to Wilson Boulevard. The project is ranked #19 on the COATS cost constrained plan which means it is programmed for funding. The estimated cost of this project is \$16.08 million.

**Langford Road.** This project extends from Wilson Boulevard (US 21) to Grover Wilson Road (S-60). The project is not on the COATS cost constrained list and has an estimated cost of \$50.3 million.

**Wilson Boulevard.** This project extends from I-77 to Blythewood Road. It is not on the COATS cost constrained plan and has an estimated cost of \$31.2 million.

### Richland Penny Projects

**Blythewood Road (Portion of COATS Project).** This project extends from I-77 to Syrup Mill Road and includes widening from 2-5 lanes. Bike and pedestrian accommodations have been proposed for the project along with a double lane roundabout at the intersection of Community Road and Cobblestone. Preliminary engineering and design for the project is approximately 98% complete and Right-of-Way acquisition is approximately 68% complete.





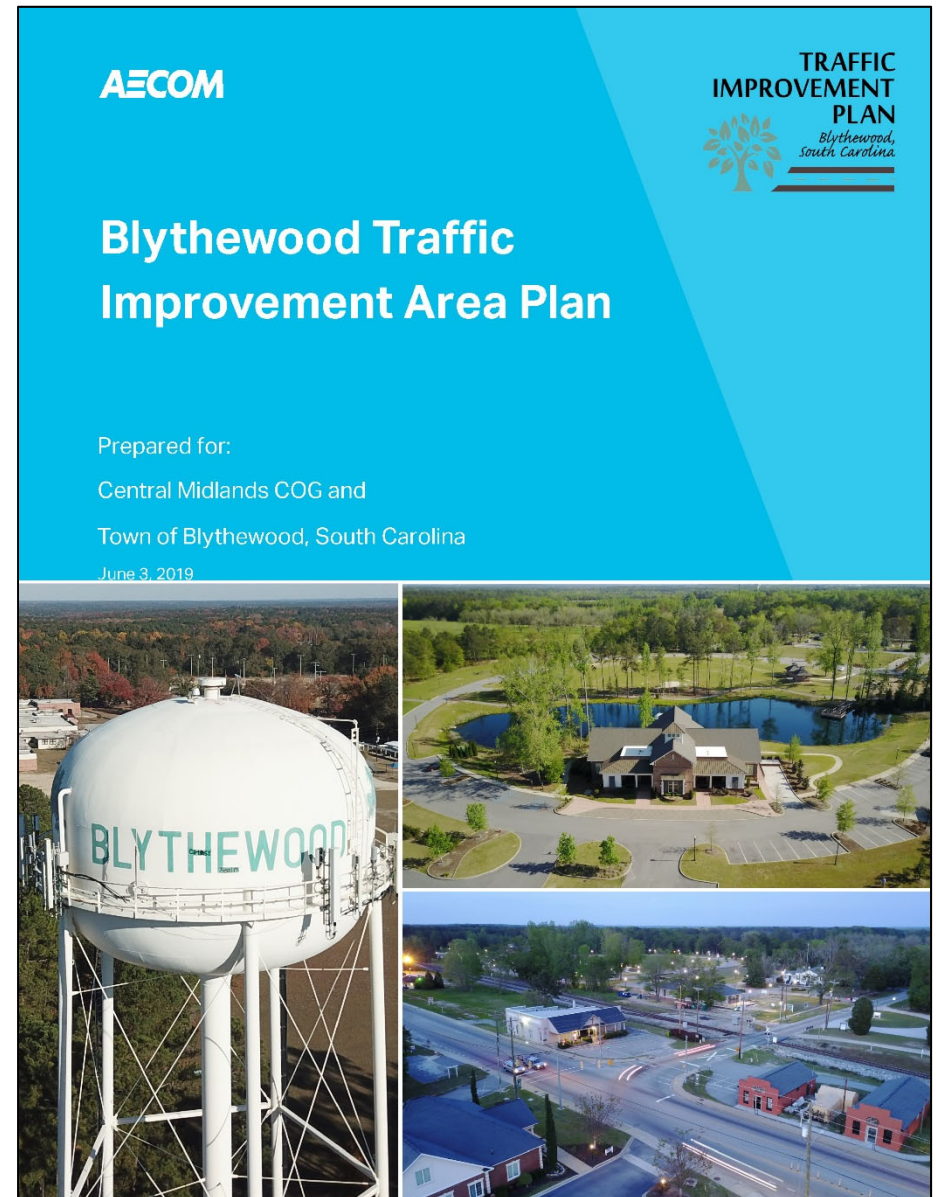
**McNulty Road.** As part of the Blythewood Road area improvements, additional improvements are planned for McNulty Road which includes widening and streetscaping from Main Street to Blythewood Road. Preliminary engineering and design is 100% complete, Right-of-Way acquisition is 99% complete, and construction plans are 60% complete.

**Creech Road.** As part of the Blythewood Road area improvements, additional improvements are planned for Creech Road which includes widening from Blythewood Road to Main Street and building the Creech Road Connector. Preliminary engineering and design is 95% complete and Right-of-Way acquisition is approximately 5% complete.

**Blythewood Road.** As part of the Blythewood Road area improvements, a road widening project is planned for the portion of Blythewood Road from I-77 to Main Street and from Syrup Mill Road to Fulmer. This project will be implemented after the Creech Road improvements are complete. Little progress has been made to date on this project.

## Blythewood Traffic Improvement Plan

In 2019 the Town of Blythewood partnered with CMCOG to produce a Traffic Improvement Area Plan for the Blythewood area. This plan contains a number of short, mid, and long-term priority recommendations for road improvements, intersection improvements, and congestion management measures. In accordance with SC Code of Law Section 6-29-520 (C), the Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan is adopted by reference into the comprehensive plan.





## Road Network

The Town of Blythewood is approximately 25 miles from the Columbia International Airport and 78 miles from the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Both airports provide domestic flights to major cities, and Charlotte Douglas provides international flights.

## Rail

Although an active track owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad passes through the Town limits, Blythewood has no rail service. The closest passenger rail station is in Columbia. There continues to be discussions of commuter rail and high speed rail service with possible stops in the Town of Blythewood but there have been no steps towards these services.

## Public Transit

Currently, public transit is not available to Blythewood. Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority implemented a commuter bus route to downtown Columbia but it was phased out in recent years due to insufficient ridership.

## Bike and Pedestrian

Sidewalks outside of the downtown area (Main Street and Blythewood Road) are limited to what has been installed as part of subdivisions. There are no formal bicycle facilities in the Town. A bikeway along Wilson Boulevard from I-77 to Farrow Road is included in the Richland county 1 cent sales tax list of projects. There is increasing demand for a greenway and trail connectivity in the Blythewood area and was supported in the public survey.

## Alternative Fuels

In 2014 the Town of Blythewood installed five electric vehicle charging stations at specific locations convenient to I-77. As a result the town became part of the growing network of electric vehicle charging stations in the region. Though many of these facilities are currently not being used, and in some cases were taken out of commission, electric vehicles are still considered to be a technology of the future and should continue to play a prominent role in local and regional transportation planning efforts.



## Summary of Key Findings

- Blythewood has excellent interstate accessibility
- Blythewood local roads are mostly two lane collectors with limited design capacity
- Blythewood Rd, Langford Rd, and Rimer Pond Road/Kelly Mill Road have seen significant increases in traffic volumes
- A number of road improvement projects are programmed through the Richland Penny and the COATS MPO
- A number of intersection improvements are needed
- Limited bike and pedestrian facilities outside of Town Center area
- No existing bus service
- Potential for future intercity rail service
- Overall transportation needs exceed available resources

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Traffic Impacts from New Developments.** Residential growth pressures will continue to worsen congestion issues in the Blythewood area. The Town should continue coordinating closely with CMCOG and Richland County to monitor status of planned transportation improvements and proposed residential developments.

**Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan.** In 2019 the Town partnered with CMCOG to produce a Traffic Improvement Area Plan for the Blythewood area. This plan contains a number of priority recommendations for road improvements, intersection improvements, and congestion management measures. The Town should work with Richland County and CMCOG to implement these recommendations as funding and coordination opportunities become available.

## GOAL #5

**Coordinate with partners to mitigate congestion, implement road improvements, and promote multi-modal connectivity**

### Strategies:

- Continue to work with partners to implement priority transportation projects to include McNulty Street, Creech Road, and Langford Road/Blythewood Road
- Coordinate with Richland County, SCDOT, CMCOG to keep up-to-date on the status of funded transportation project and to communicate transportation needs
- Evaluate feasibility/prioritize intersection improvements and other projects identified in the Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan
- Develop an area-wide trail/greenway plan
- Evaluate, prioritize, and work with partners to implement bike and pedestrian improvements to include enhancements to the I-77 overpass
- Support development of future intercity rail connections between Columbia and Charlotte
- Promote and support adoption of congestion management strategies (e.g., remote work, rideshare, etc.)



# 8 Community Facilities





## Introduction

The community facilities element inventories and assesses the infrastructure necessary to provide services to the public over the ten-year planning horizon of the comprehensive plan. The Planning Act requires the community facilities element to consider the following: water and sewer systems, solid waste collection and disposal, public safety, park and recreational facilities, educational facilities, libraries, and other governmental services.

## Water and Sewer

The Town of Winnsboro began providing water service to the Town of Blythewood in 1997. Initially, only certain areas of Blythewood had access to this service. The remainder of the Town was connected to the system in the fall of 2001 – spring of 2002. The Town of Winnsboro historically received its raw water supply from a 192 acre lake, Sandy Creek and a quarry/reservoir which was added in the fall of 2000. In recent years, the Town of Winnsboro constructed a new raw water line to the Broad River which substantially increased the raw water supply and made it less vulnerable to the impacts of sustained drought conditions. Winnsboro’s water treatment plant capacity is 3.1 MGD, and the system has a total storage capacity, including elevated, ground and pressure tanks, in excess of 3.5 million gallons. To mitigate system vulnerabilities, Winnsboro also entered into an emergency water service agreement to purchase water from the City of Columbia. That agreement, in addition to the new raw water line connecting their supply to the Broad River, has provided Winnsboro with the capacity to sustain current and future water demand, despite any possible future drought conditions.

The City of Columbia also provides direct water service to some properties in the southern portion of the Town and adjacent areas. As the Columbia water system expands towards the Town of Blythewood, the Town’s ability to grow towards the south may be enhanced because of this expanded water system. As the Town grows and develops it will need to continue coordinating with both the City of Columbia and the Town of Winnsboro to ensure access to an adequate water supply.

Palmetto Utilities provided sewer service to the area starting in 1997. Palmetto Utilities, now owned by South Carolina Water Utilities, was a private utility system franchised to provide sewer service to the northeastern portion of Richland County. Granted a contract and franchise by Richland County and the Public Service Commission, Palmetto Utilities provided service to several large developments including: Briarcliffe Estates, Longcreek Plantation, The Summit and Woodbranch. Southwest Water now owns a large regional wastewater treatment facility in Kershaw County and continues to provide expanded sewer service to the Blythewood area. The City of Columbia also provides sewer service to a number of residential, commercial and industrial areas to the south and west of the Town of Blythewood. Continued coordination with both Southwest Water and the City of Columbia is essential necessary as the Town and surrounding area continues to grow.

## Solid Waste

Richland County contracts with Advanced Disposal and Waste Industries for solid waste and recycling collection in the Blythewood area.



## Public Safety

**Fire and EMS.** An EMS and fire facility is located on U.S. 21 just north of Blythewood Road. This facility is operated by Richland County.

**Magistrate Court.** Magistrate Court is located on McNulty Street in a building jointly occupied by the Sheriff's Department.

**Police.** The Richland County Sheriff's Department provides policing in the Blythewood area. The department has established a separate facility in Blythewood on McNulty Street in a building jointly occupied by the Magistrate Court.

## Recreation

Richland County Recreation Commission operates a 21.62 acre recreation complex located on Boney Road, across from Bethel-Hanberry Elementary School. In addition to two lighted Dixie Youth baseball fields, one lighted softball field, two tennis courts, a playground and picnic facilities with shelter, there is a recreation center with meeting rooms, weight room, and basketball facilities. The Town has also been in discussions with Richland County and other stakeholders about the potential for building a new active regional recreation facility in the area. Such a facility would provide much needed active recreation space for area residents. The Town and County have also been exploring opportunities for incorporation recreation facilities into the design of the industrial park. The Urban Land Institute report referenced on page 26 also supports this concept.

In addition to active recreation facilities, the Town also has passive recreation amenities located at Doko Meadows Park. These include playground areas, walking trails, an open meadow, and an amphitheater which hosts numerous events throughout the year. Expansion of the Doko Meadows Park is being actively pursued by the Doko Meadows Park Foundation.

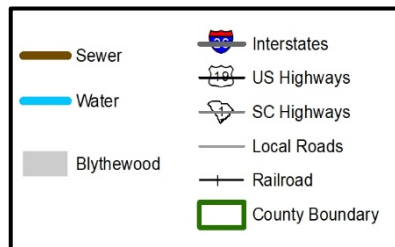
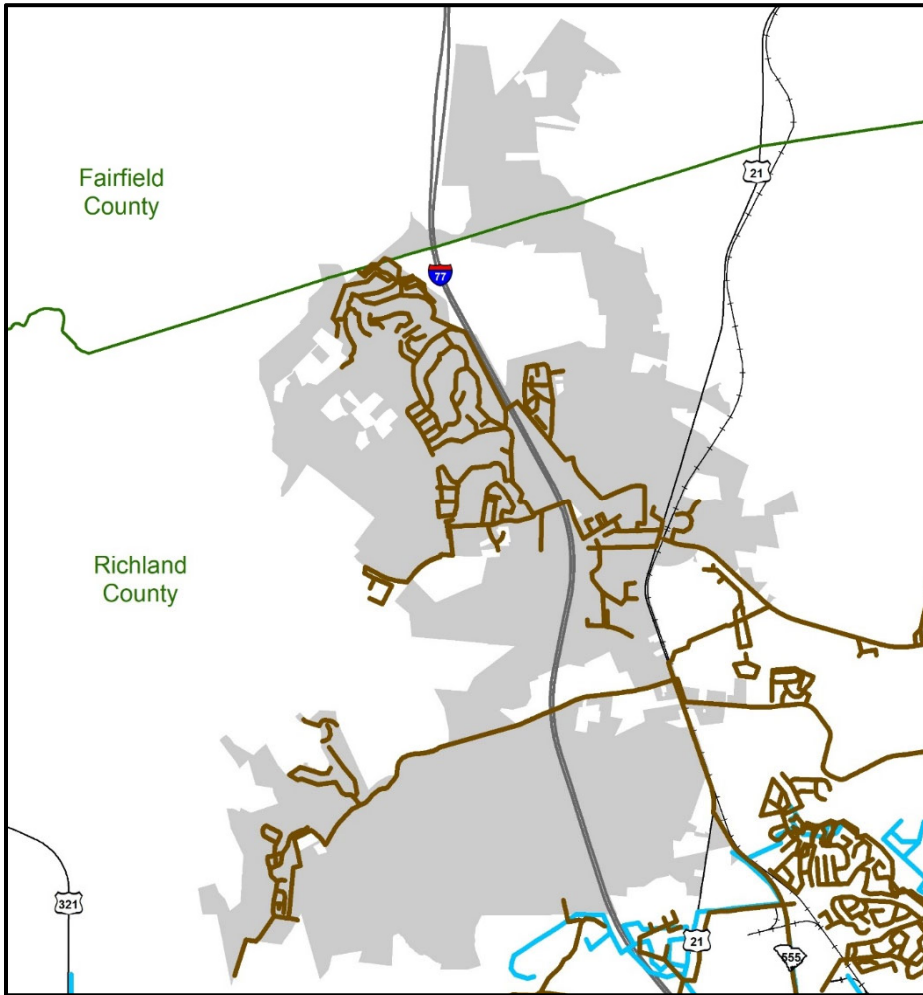
## Town Hall and Meeting Facilities

**Town Hall.** Town Hall is located at 171 Langford Road in the Hoffman House. Town staff and the Mayor have offices in Town Hall. Council chambers and and commission meeting space is provided at Doko Manor.

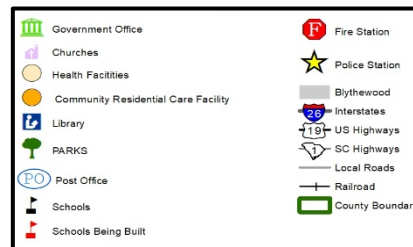
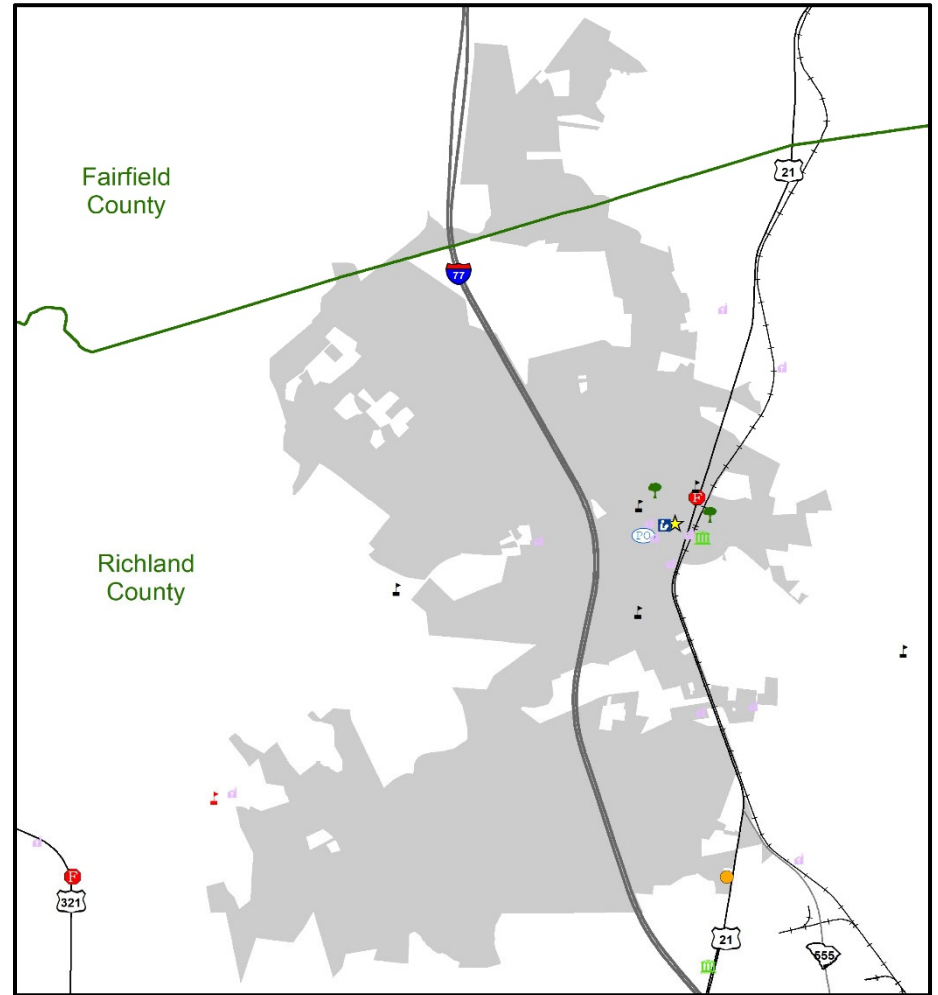
**Doko Manor.** Doko Manor first opened in March 2013. Located in 22 acre Doko Meadows Park, the Manor features over 5000 square feet of usable interior event space including a 3240 square foot ballroom, an 700 square foot gallery/lobby, a business conference room, a full catering kitchen, spacious front porches, two picturesque back porches complete with rocking chairs and a beautiful outside pergola bordering a scenic small lake. Doko Manor is designed to host a wide range of social and business events including weddings, receptions, parties, corporate retreats, business meetings, educational seminars and workshops, and civic events. The Manor is open seven days a week from 7:00am to 12:00 am midnight.



Map 8.1: Water and Sewer Service



Map 8.2: Community Facilities





## Schools and Libraries

**Schools.** There are three schools located within the Town limits: Bethel-Hanberry Elementary, Blythewood High School and the Blythewood Lifelong Learning Center. Students from the elementary school are sent to Blythewood Middle School and then to Blythewood High School which opened in 2005. Schools outside the town but serving the area include Round Top Elementary, Langford Elementary, Blythewood Middle, Muller Road Middle and Westwood High School. The school district is in the process building a new state-of-the-art Elementary School at the existing Bethel-Hanberry site. Once the new school is finished, the old school will be torn down. Because of existing development pressures and projected elementary school enrollment, the new school is expected to already be at capacity by the time it opens.

**Library.** A branch of the Richland County Public Library is located on McNulty Road. It is a 4,000 square foot facility and has a circulation of 156,000 items. The current building began operation in 1992. The proceeds of an approved bond referendum in 2013 were used to make system-wide improvements to all the Richland Library facilities over the last several years. Richland Library continues to see its mission evolving beyond lending books and the newly renovated Blythewood facility reflects this changing mission. In addition to an approximately 2,800 square foot building expansion, the new facility also includes additional amenities such as: partnering space, teen space, meeting rooms, a learning lab, group study rooms, and additional outdoor programming space.



Top: Entrance to Doko Park

Bottom: Bethel-Hanberry Elementary School, soon to be demolished and replaced by a new school facility.





## Summary of Key Findings

- School enrollment has steadily increased with development trends
- The Town depends on agreements with other entities to provide essential public services such as water, sewer, and EMS
- Water and sewer service are provided by multiple service providers
- Doko Meadows Park and Doko Manor are important community assets for civic engagement, events, and recreation
- Potential for expansion of active and passive recreation facilities
- Intergovernmental and stakeholder coordination is essential for meeting community facility needs

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Public Service Coordination.** The Town relies on other governmental and non-governmental entities to provide essential public services. In order to maintain existing levels of service and ensure services are keeping up with an ever increasing demand, the Town must continue to prioritize interagency coordination and collaboration.

**Parks and Recreation.** Park and recreation facilities, both active and passive, are in high demand within the Town and surrounding areas. Residential growth continues to put pressure on existing facilities. The Town should continue working with Richland County and other partners to identify opportunities for expanding active recreation facilities. The Town should also continue to prioritize and support investing in and expanding Doko Meadows Park and Manor. These facilities are a local and regional asset and serve as a focal point for the Town.

## GOAL #6

**Provide a high level of public services and infrastructure in an efficient, cost-effective, and respectful manner**

### Strategies:

- Continue coordination with Richland County to enhance and sustain public safety and EMS services
- Continue coordination with Winnsboro, Columbia, Richland County, and Southwest Water (FKA Palmetto Utilities) to enhance and sustain quality water, sewer, and stormwater services
- Work with Richland County and other community partners to develop a new regional active recreation facility in the Blythewood Area
- Maintain, enhance, and expand Doko Meadows Park and recreation facilities to include safety and security measures, new playground equipment, and event venue improvements
- Coordinate with Richland School District 2 to ensure school facilities are keeping pace with residential development and community needs
- Evaluate the feasibility of implementing co-location, joint use agreements for public facilities with Richland 2 and Richland County
- Ensure Town staffing and service levels are keeping pace with growth and changing community needs



# 9 Land Use

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## Introduction

The land use element can be viewed as a distillation of the entire comprehensive plan's policies, goals, and objectives. Many of the existing conditions and future policy considerations related to population, housing, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, economic development, and transportation are rooted in how land has been and will be used in the Town of Blythewood. In this land use element, current land use is described and analyzed to develop a future land use plan to guide the development of the Town over the next ten years.

## Existing Land Use

Primary existing land uses within the Town consist of commercial, residential, rural, and industrial uses. These types and intensities of uses have remained relatively constant over the last several decades. Most of the growth has occurred in the residential sector as new housing developments have been constructed both within and immediately adjacent to the Town.

**Commercial.** Commercial development is concentrated on Blythewood Road, McNulty Road and U.S. 21. There are a couple of isolated commercial establishments located east of the railroad tracks. Because of the access to I-77, most of the intense commercial development has occurred along Blythewood Road, between I-77 and Boney Road. The Village at Blythewood is a commercial development adjacent to Cobblestone with retail and personal services. Plans have called for residential development, short-term housing for overnight guests and additional commercial/office development on the remainder of the commercial property. Near the intersection of Blythewood Road and Highway 21 there are continued discussions regarding future 'Town center' projects that would incorporate a mix of commercial, residential and civic uses.

**Residential.** Within the Town limits, as well as the surrounding areas, the most common land use is residential. The residential development is almost entirely single family on large lots. There are several "neighborhoods" within the Town limits including: Cobblestone (formerly The University Club), Ashley Oaks, Dawson Creek, Dawson Pond, Oakhurst, and Blythe Creek. Cobblestone Park (formerly The University Club), located west of I-77 on Blythewood Road, is a Planned Development District incorporating a mix of residential lot sizes, a 27-hole golf course, club house and training facility for the University of South Carolina Golf Team. Originally the commercial area currently known as The Village at Blythewood was part of the University Club PDD, but it is now under a separate development plan. Residential uses are found in every part of Town and developments are primarily characterized by low density, single family, detached housing units.

**Industrial.** There is currently limited industrial development within the Town limits, however, a large planned industrial park has been partially annexed into the Town, and is in the process of being jointly planned between the Town of Blythewood and Richland County Economic Development. Richland County owns the 1,350 acre site. Current plans for this site, as discussed in the Economic Element, are to reserve approximately 100 acres of frontage area for commercial development, 73 of which are within the Town of Blythewood and zoned as the Town Center District. Industrial and business commercial uses are planned for the remainder of the site. Some light industrial activities are also scattered throughout the area to include a mini-warehouse facility located along Community Drive right next to the I-77 on-ramp.

**Rural.** Much of the area around the Town of Blythewood is rural in nature with land uses dominated by agriculture, forestry, and large lot rural residential development. These rural uses add to the Town's distinctive, small town, rural character.



## Future Land Use

Future land use designations are the primary instrument for defining how the Town of Blythewood would like to grow and develop over the life of this plan. Map 9.1 presents the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM is designed as a guideline for developing capital improvement plans, drawing zoning district boundaries, reviewing and adjudicating zoning map amendment (re-zoning) applications, and reviewing and deciding on the approval of land development applications. Decisions on the conformity of future proposed projects to the Comprehensive Plan should not be made solely on consulting the FLUM; rather, the map should be used in conjunction with all applicable Comprehensive Plan policies, goals, and objectives as a whole.

Unlike zoning district mapping, there are no quantitative definitions for each classification that will delineate hard and fast land use lines on the map. Lines between land use classifications should be viewed as transition zones between land uses. Furthermore, land use classification boundaries are subject to revision, as future land use designations will be tied to knowledge of planned state and federally funded infrastructure projects. There will be inevitable adjustments in long-range planning made in response to development pressures, economic trends and developments, and national, regional, and local socio-economic and demographic forces, all of which will also require adjustments to the FLUM.

**Compliance Table Index.** Table 9.3 provides guidance for the conformity of proposed rezoning or land development request with the future land use plan and its policies. The table lists the future land use categories as shown on the FLUM, summarizes the respective land use policies, and identifies principal uses intended for each mapped area.

The table provides a range of zoning district classifications that are consistent with each future land use classification. A request for a rezoning into a district not listed will require careful scrutiny.

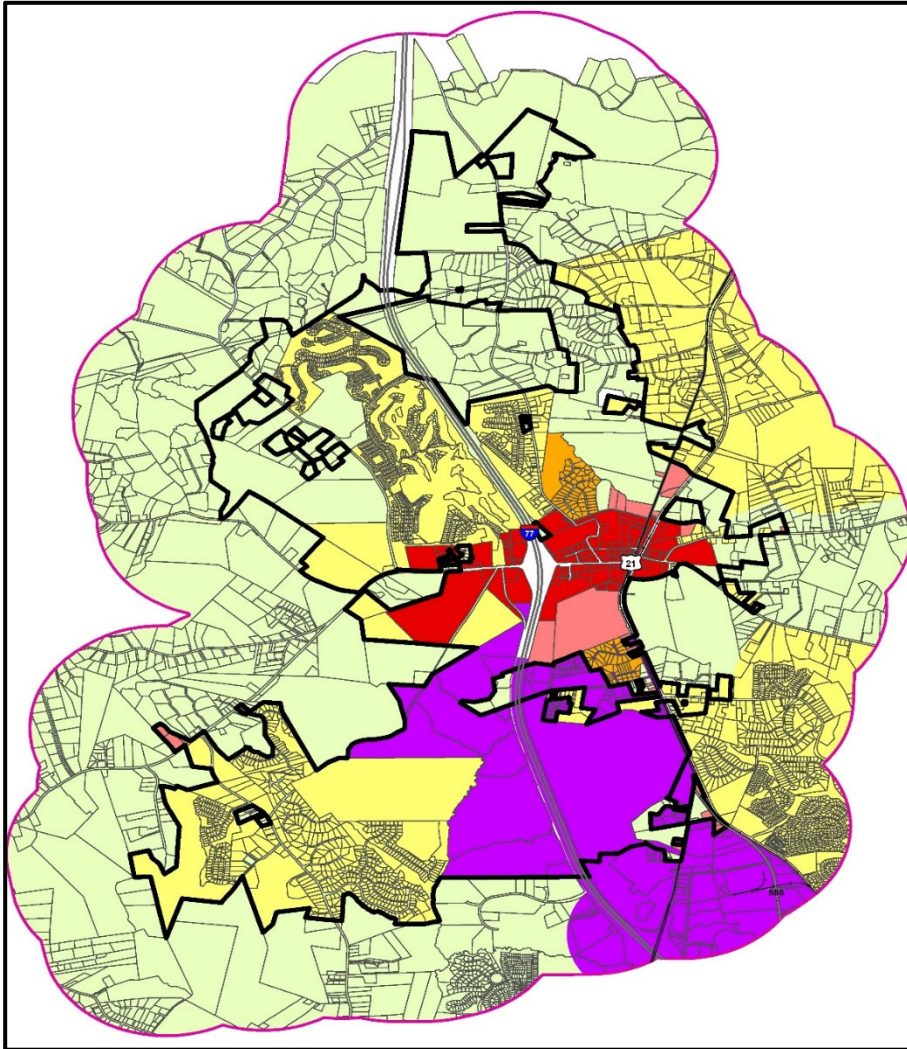
Questions to consider when reviewing rezoning requests include:

- Is the subject parcel(s) located in proximity to the transition from one land use classification to another or is it well within the subject land use classification?
- Does the proposed rezoning further other policies, goals, objectives, and of the other comprehensive plan elements?
- Has there been significant development pressures, economic trends and developments, and national, regional, and local socio-economic and demographic forces since the comprehensive plan was last revised or updated?
- Is the subject parcel located within an Overlay District which may require special consideration?

If a request is approved for a rezoning to a zoning district not listed in the table's compatible zoning district or alternative zoning district columns, a FLUM and/or a zoning district use regulations revision may be required along with the rezoning approval. Compliance with the land use plan and the compliance index does not entitle an applicant to a rezoning request approval. Other factors such as the potential impact on traffic, natural resources, historical places, etc. could be a factor. Changes to the Town's zoning or land development regulations that may impact the compatible zoning districts or alternate zoning districts for any land use listed on the Compliance Index table will require a revision of the table.

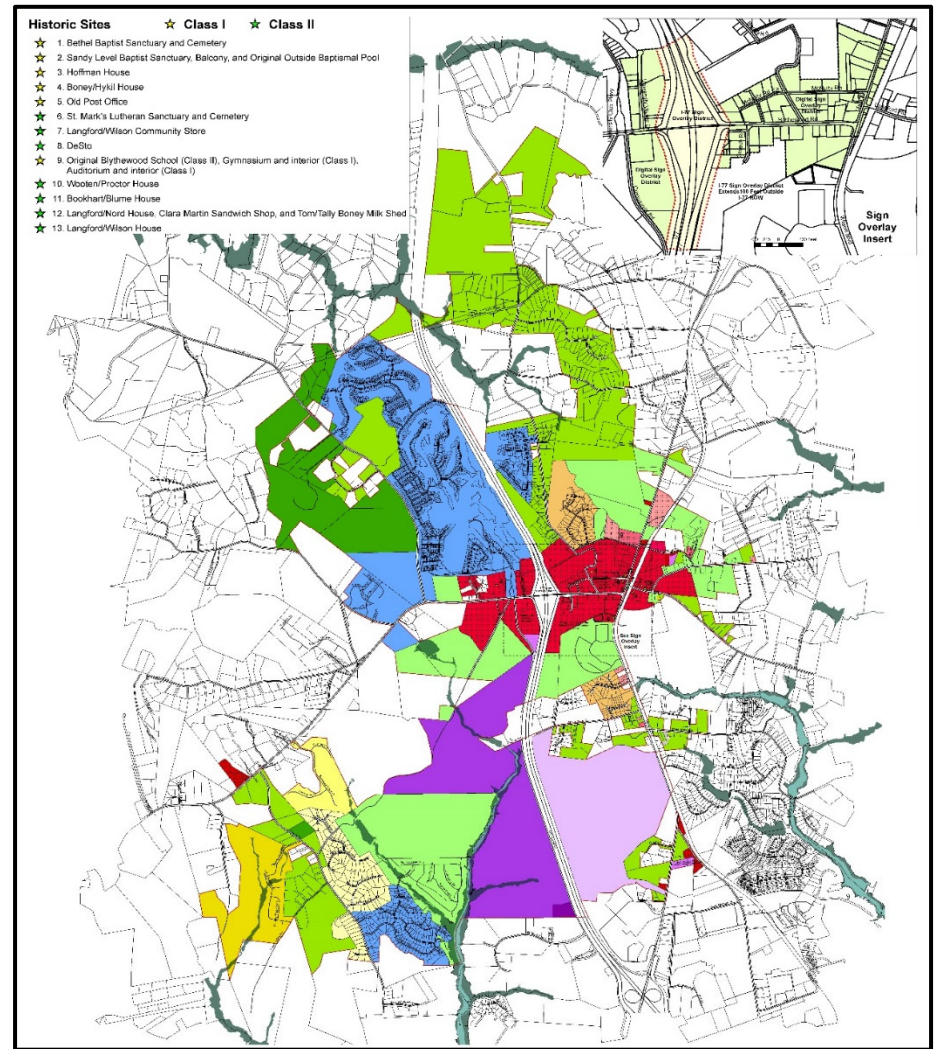


### Map 10.1: Future Land Use Map



Municipal Boundaries  
 3/4 Mile Buffer from Municipal Boundary  
**Blythewood FULU**  
 RR - Rural Residential  
 LDR - Low Density Residential  
 RDF - Residential Density Flex  
 TC - Town Center  
 CNR - Neighborhood Commercial  
 CBI - Business/Industrial Commercial

### Map 10.2: Zoning Map



- Historic Sites**
- ★ Class I
  - ★ Class II
  - ★ 1. Bethel Baptist Sanctuary and Cemetery
  - ★ 2. Sandy Level Baptist Sanctuary, Balcony, and Original Outside Baptismal Pool
  - ★ 3. Hoffman House
  - ★ 4. Boney/Hyatt House
  - ★ 5. Old Post Office
  - ★ 6. St. Mark's Lutheran Sanctuary and Cemetery
  - ★ 7. Langford/Wilson Community Store
  - ★ 8. DeSto
  - ★ 9. Original Blythewood School (Class II), Gymnasium and interior (Class I), Auditorium and interior (Class I)
  - ★ 10. Woolen/Proctor House
  - ★ 11. Bookhart/Blume House
  - ★ 12. Langford/Nord House, Clara Martin Sandwich Shop, and Tom/Tally Boney Milk Shed
  - ★ 13. Langford/Wilson House

**Legend**

RE - Rural Estate District	R-5 - General Residential District	LIRP - Light Industrial Research Park District	Municipal Boundary
RU - Rural District	NO - Neighborhood Office District	LI - Limited Industrial District	Parcels
D-1 - Development District	NC - Neighborhood Commercial District	LI-2 - Limited Industrial Two District	FPD-100-Year Floodplain Overlay District
R-40 - Low Density Residential District	MO - Multi-neighborhood Office District	BI - Basic Industrial District	FWO-100-Year Floodway Overlay District
R-20 - Low Density Single-Family Residential District	MC - Multi-neighborhood Commercial District	PD - Planned Development District	500-Year Floodplain
R-12 - Single-Family Residential District	TC - Town Center District	Annexed - Zoning Pending	
R-8 - 1 and 2-Family Residential District	CC - Community Commercial District	AO - Architectural Overlay District	



**Table 10.1: Future Land Use Compliance Index**

Symbol	Land Use Classification	Summary Objectives	Principal Permitted Uses	Compatible Zoning Districts	Alternative Zoning Districts
RR	Rural Residential	To preserve the existing rural character of the area	Large lot, rural residential, agriculture, forestry, conservation uses	RE, RU	R-40, R-20, PD
LDR	Low Density Residential	To promote development of low density, single family residential housing	Single-family, detached site-built dwellings	R-40, R-20, R-12	RE, RU, PD
RDF	Residential Density Flex	To meet the varied housing needs of changing residential market and to allow for a mix of uses as appropriate	Single-family, townhouses, patio homes, multi-family homes, limited commercial and neighborhood retail	R-8, R-5	PD, CC
TC	Town Center	To concentrate business, retail establishments, and some higher density residential developments for cumulative draw in areas accessible to the community at large for purposes of creating and maintaining a centralized business district.	Town-wide/community oriented retail, service, office, and higher density residential uses	TC	NO, NC, MO, MC, CC, PD
CNR	Commercial-Neighborhood Retail	To concentrate small neighborhood oriented commercial retail and service establishments in areas accessible to surrounding residential districts, some mixed use residential as appropriate	Small scale retail, service, and office establishments, higher density limited residential	NC, NO, CC, MO, MC	TC, PD, LIRP, LI, LI-2
CBI	Commercial-Business Industrial	To promote the development of Business and Industrial Parks and protect existing industry and areas with industrial potential for future industrial development	Office, Wholesale, Service, Manufacturing, Warehousing, and Light Industrial Uses.	LIRP, LI, LI-2, BI, NO	NC, MO, MC, CC, PD



## Overlay Districts

The Town currently has an Architectural Overlay District that primarily focuses on the Town Center District, but also includes oversight over all property within the NO neighborhood office, NC neighborhood commercial, MO multi-neighborhood office, MC multi-neighborhood commercial, CC community commercial zoning districts, and includes commercial land uses within a Planned Development District. The Overlay district is intended to promote the development of aesthetically pleasing commercial areas which invite business establishments and will attract resident and visitor patronage.

In addition to the Architectural Overlay District, the Town's Zoning Ordinance also recognizes 100 year Floodway and 100 Year Floodplain Overlay districts which are designed to restrict development activity within areas vulnerable to flooding. The boundaries of these overlay districts correspond with the 100 year floodway and 100 year floodplain boundaries. Because they have limited development potential, these areas can provide a framework from which to develop a greenway and trail network within the Town.

## Activity Centers

The Town recognizes the potential for key intersections to become commercial nodes and activity centers. With good planning, these areas can become a local focal point for commercial, social, and business related activities. While limited development may currently exist at these sites, consideration should be given to the role they may play in the future as surrounding areas develop. Typically, areas within a ¼ mile key intersections, may be appropriate for mixed use and neighborhood oriented retail and business development and should be considered on a case by case basis when reviewing zoning requests and development proposals.

## Annexation

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) includes areas currently outside of the Town limits. This includes some large “donut holes” or unincorporated county regulated parcels surrounded by and contiguous to land within the Town limits. While Richland County regulates development in these areas, they are included on the FLUM so the Town can consider future land uses for these areas should they be annexed into the Town at some future date.

Annexation is a priority for the Town as the NE Richland area continues to grow at a rapid pace. Prioritizing donut holes and adjacent areas with the highest development pressure could help the Town to manage growth, preserve open space and the rural character of surrounding land uses, and increase efficiencies in public service delivery.



## Summary of Key Findings

- Existing land uses within and surrounding Blythewood are dominated by rural and residential land uses
- Residential land uses are dominated by low density, single family detached housing
- The town center district is the primary commercial corridor for the area
- Existing and future industrial land uses predominate on the southern portion of the town along I-77
- The Town has a number of donut holes and adjacent areas that should be considered for possible annexation
- The Town's zoning ordinance has an extensive number of zoning districts, many of which are not being used
- Significant development pressure exists in the Blythewood area
- Rural landscape and open space preservation was identified as a priority during the public input process

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Zoning and Land Development Regulations.** The Town's existing zoning ordinance and land development regulations are very complex and contain numerous zoning designations many of which are not currently being used. The Town should prioritize reviewing and updating the zoning ordinance with a focus on consolidating districts and simplifying regulations.

**Annexation.** As a means for better managing growth, the Town should review and strengthen its annexation policy and prioritize areas for annexation, to include closing donut holes and focusing on adjacent areas with high development pressure.

## GOAL #7

**Coordinate with partners and neighboring jurisdictions to manage growth and preserve Blythewood's small town, rural character**

### Strategies:

- Review and update zoning ordinance and land development regulations with particular consideration given to: reducing the number of districts, simplifying district regulations, and incentivizing the protection open space and "working lands"
- Assess annexation priorities and feasibility with a focus on donut holes and adjacent areas with development potential
- Establish trail and open space zoning provisions
- Continue to support and strengthen the Town Center District
- Evaluate strategies for rural landscape preservation
- Coordinate with Richland County to ensure compatible land use and zoning designations for properties in potential growth areas





# 10 Resilience





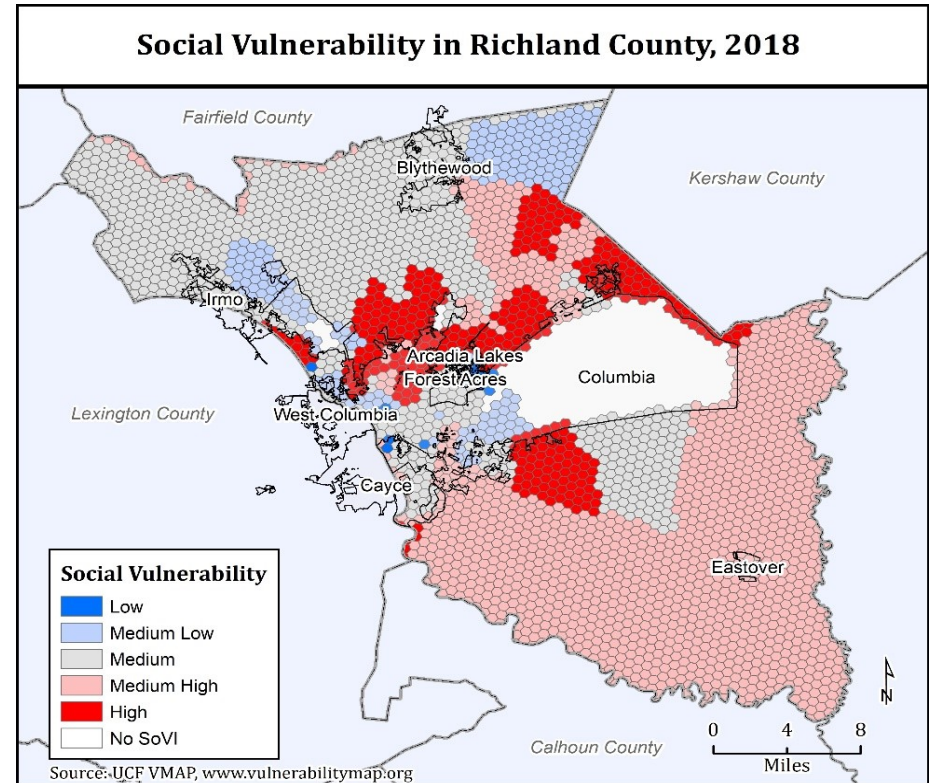
## Introduction

The Disaster Relief and Resilience Act of 2020 amended Section 6-29-510 (D) of the SC Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act to require the development of a separate resiliency element for the Comprehensive Plan. Per the requirements of the act, the element should consider the impacts of flooding, high water, and natural hazards on individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, and public health, safety and welfare. The element should also promote resilient planning, design and development; be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies; and be coordinated with the other elements and the comprehensive plan goals and strategies.

## Natural Hazard Risk and Vulnerability

The Town of Blythewood is vulnerable to a number of natural hazards. This vulnerability is not just a result of physical and environmental characteristics but is also a result of social vulnerability, which refers to the characteristics of a population in terms of the ability to anticipate, cope with, and recover from the impact of natural hazard events. Social vulnerability can be calculated with a composite index based on wealth, sex, age, employment, poverty, race, ethnicity, and transportation access. As shown on Map 10.1, the Town generally has a medium social vulnerability rating, with the areas to the east of Town having a medium low rating, and the areas southeast of Town having a medium high rating.

Map 10.1: Social Vulnerability (2018)



Based on historical events, the Town and is most at risk from the following types of natural hazards:

- Extreme Heat/Drought
- Winter Weather
- Tornadoes
- Tropical Storm/Hurricanes
- Thunderstorms and Heavy Precipitation Events
- Flash Flooding



**Table 10.1: Natural Hazard Historical Events and Loss in Richland County**

	Direct Losses (Property and Crop)	Total USDA Crop Indemnity Payout****	Direct Injuries and Fatalities	# Of Loss-Causing Events	Frequency	Recurrence Interval (in years)	Future Changes
Flooding	\$36,580,114	\$118,153	40	177	4.90%	0.2	▲
Hurricane	\$105,686,154	\$69,076	32	10	1.10%	0.94	▲
Tornadoes	\$19,554,807	n/av	18	18	1.60%	0.61	▲
Thunderstorm**	\$11,411,990	\$4,700,180	16	321	31%	0.03	▲
Lightning	\$6,474,975	n/av	65	84	1.4%*	0.73 days*	▲
Wind	\$10,228,633	\$98,201	18	348	18%	0.06	▲
Hail	\$728,465	\$180,631	3	76	5.70%	0.18	▲
Fog	n/av	n/av	n/av	n/av	0.08%*	12.7 days*	◀▶
Winter Storm	\$18,260,484***	\$94,208	7	57	0.47%	2.1	▼
Cold*****	\$11,679,375	\$274,192	5	35	49%	0.02	▼
Heat	\$12,746,647	\$2,393,606	7	14	25%	0.04	▲
Drought	\$16,069,921	\$ 6,445,058	0	16	0.40%	2.5	▲
Wildfire	\$401,355	n/av	0	3	0.09%*	10.8 days*	▲
Earthquake	0	n/av	0	0	0.03%	40	◀▶
TOTAL	\$238,143,545	\$ 14,733,305	211	1125			

Source: Central Midlands Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)

\* daily frequency/recurrence calculations instead of years

\*\*coastal storms combined with thunderstorms/severe storms

\*\*\*no 2004 ice storm losses reported by NWS

\*\*\*\*hazards with n/av have no event records that resulted in USDA Crop Indemnity Payouts

\*\*\*\*\*cold hazard totals already included in winter storm totals

▲ indicates that future increase in occurrence and/or impacts is likely

▼ indicates that future decrease in occurrence and/or impacts is likely

◀▶ indicates that either no change in future occurrence or impacts is expected or that a determination of future changes cannot be made.



**Table 10.2: Natural Hazard Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Richland County**

Perceived Risk	Hazard	Geographic Extent of Hazard Threat (THR)	Vulnerability (VUL)	Severity of Consequence (CON)	Severity of Consequence (CON) subcomponents			Overall Risk	
					Future Climate Impacts	Historical Impacts	<a href="#">Priority Hazards[1]</a>		
Somewhat Important	Winter Weather	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Unlikely to worsen	↔	Minor	High	Low
More Important	Extreme Heat	Widespread	High	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Major	High	High
Somewhat Important	Droughts	Isolated	Low	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	High	Medium
Somewhat Important	Tornadoes	Scattered	Medium	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Major	High	Medium
Somewhat Important	Tropical Storms	Widespread	Medium	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Extensive	High	High
More Important	Wind	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Extensive	Medium	Low
Less Important	Extreme Cold	Isolated	Medium	Minor	Unlikely to worsen	↔	Major	Medium	Low
Least Important	Earthquakes	Widespread	High	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Minor	Medium	Medium
Somewhat Important	Flash Floods	Widespread	High	Severe	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Extensive	Medium	High
More Important	Lightning	Widespread	High	Moderate	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Extensive	Low	High
Somewhat Important	Hail	Isolated	Low	Minor	Somewhat likely to worsen	↑	Minor	Low	Low
Somewhat Important	Thunderstorms	Widespread	Medium	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Extensive	Low	High
Less Important	Fog	Widespread	High	Minor	Unlikely to worsen	↔	Minor	Low	Low
Least Important	Wildfires	Isolated	Low	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	Low	Medium
Somewhat Important	Riverine Floods	Widespread	Medium	Moderate	Likely to worsen	↑↑	Minor	Low	Medium

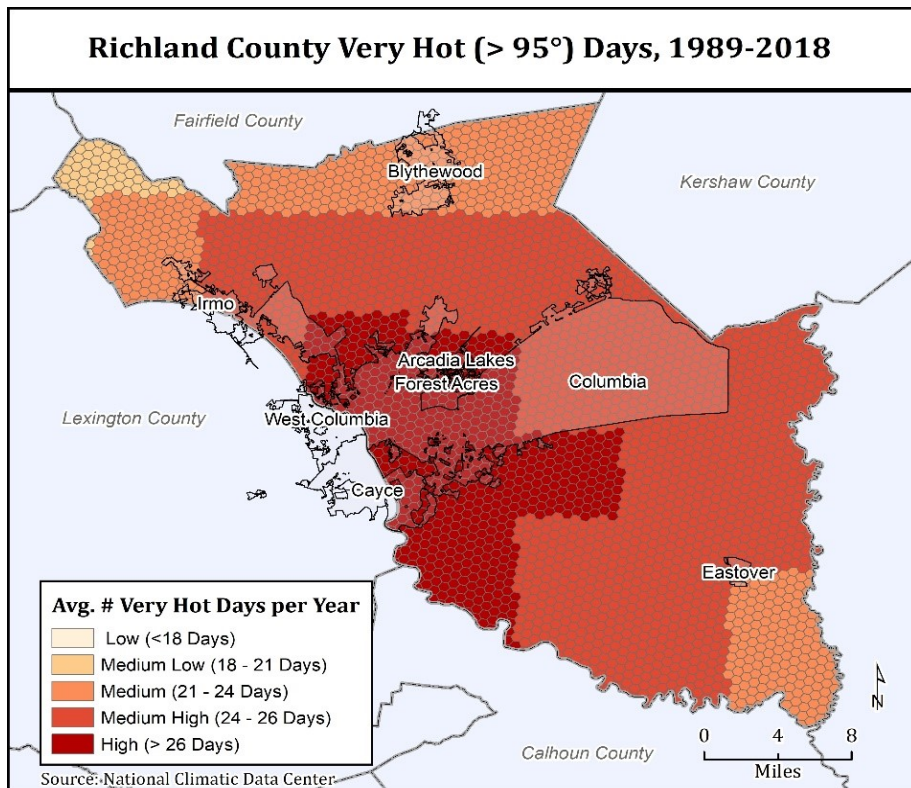
Source: Central Midlands Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)



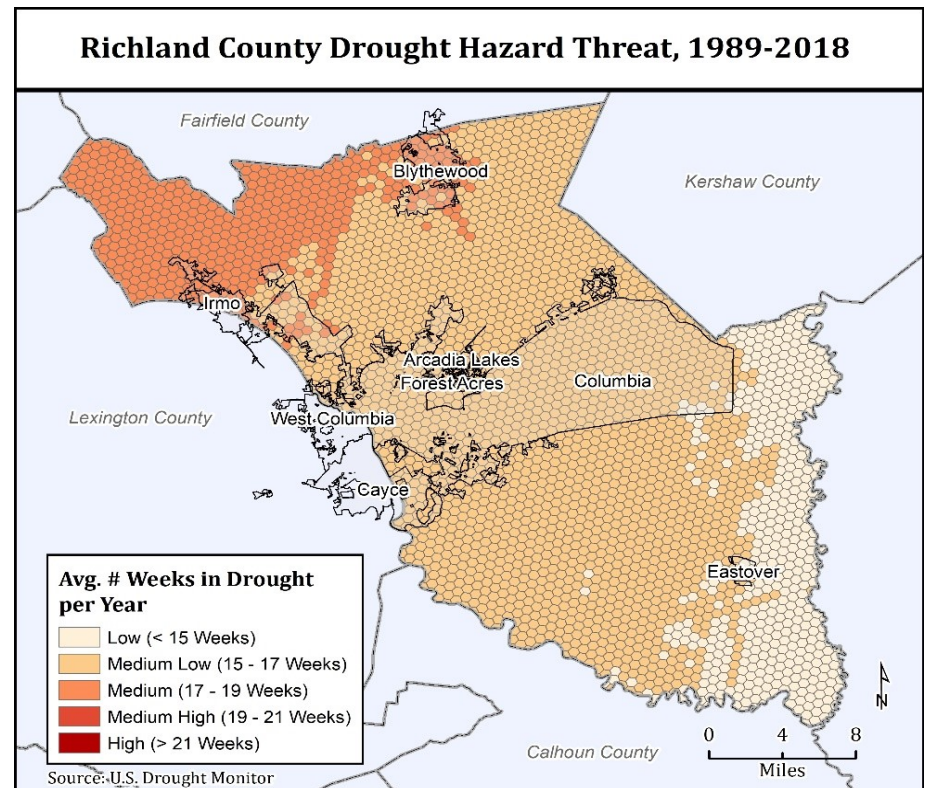
**Extreme Heat.** Extreme heat and drought impact all of Richland County. On average the Blythewood area experiences 21-24 days a year of greater than 95 degree temperatures. Periods of greater than 100 degree temperatures can be experienced in May, June, July, August, September, and October. The year 2020 tied with 2016 for the warmest year on record. Extreme heat represents a significant public health concern, especially for vulnerable populations.

**Drought.** Sustained periods of drought can significantly impact water and sewer utilities, agriculture, recreation, and associated industries. On average the Blythewood area experiences 17-19 weeks per year in drought status. This is slightly higher than other areas of Richland County which experience 15-17 weeks a year of drought.

Map 10.2: Heat Hazard Threat



Map 10.3: Drought Hazard Threat



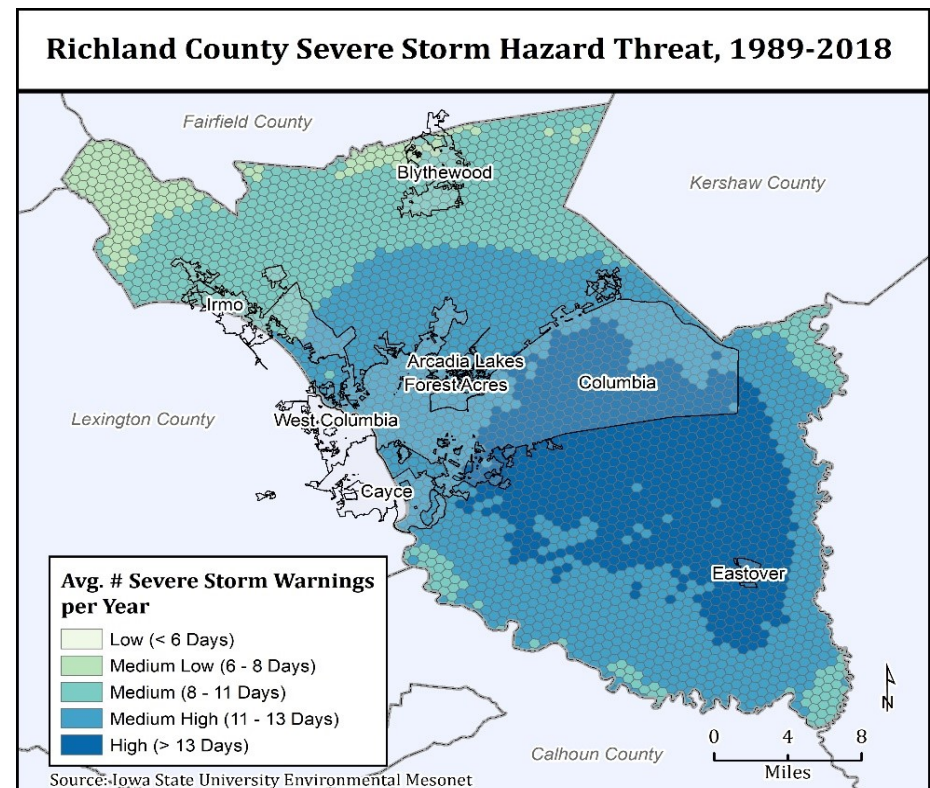
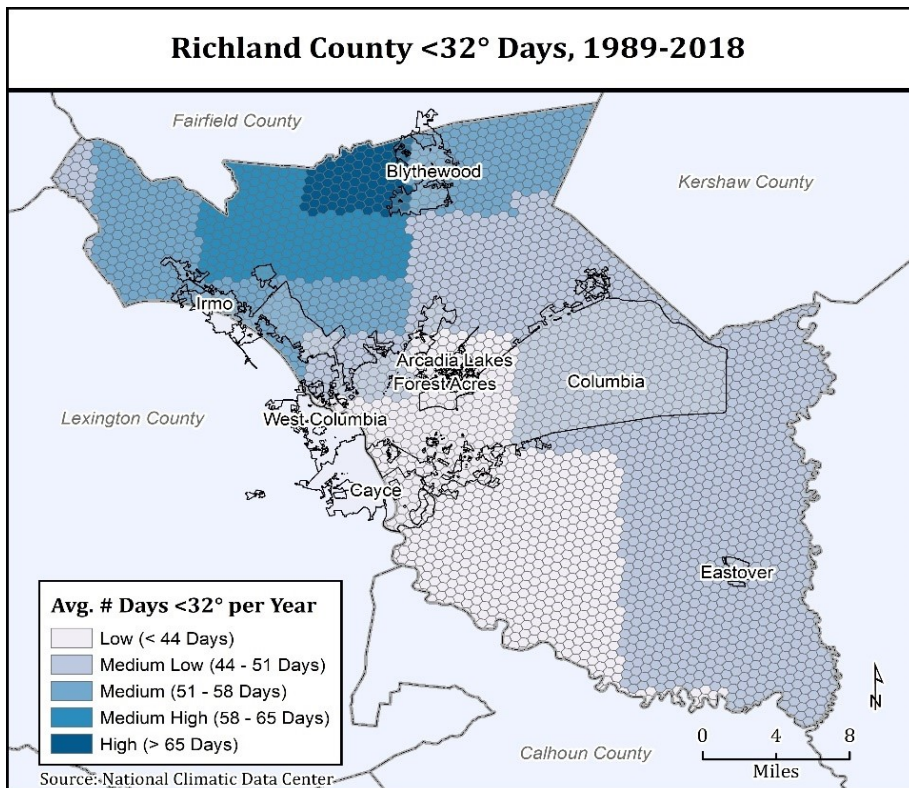


**Cold/Winter Weather.** Cold/winter weather impacts all of Richland County. The Blythewood area typically experiences 51-65 days per year when temperatures are below freezing. Ice storms associated with winter weather can cause significant disruptions and property damage and occur with high frequency. Freezing temperatures are also a public health concern, especially for vulnerable populations. Federal disasters were declared for winter weather in 2000, 2004, 2014.

**Hurricane/Tropical Storms/Severe Storms.** All of Richland County is at risk from severe storms, hurricane force winds, and associated heavy precipitation. The Blythewood area typically experiences 8-11 severe storm warnings per year. Significant hurricane/tropical force wind events impact the county approximately every 7 years. The Midlands area, including the Town of Blythewood also serves as a host for coastal area evacuees. Recent events include Dorian (2019), Michael (2018), Florence (2018), Irma (2017), Mathew (2016). Tropical storms and hurricanes are also expected to increase in frequency and intensity in future years as a result of climate change.

Map 10.4: Cold Weather Threat

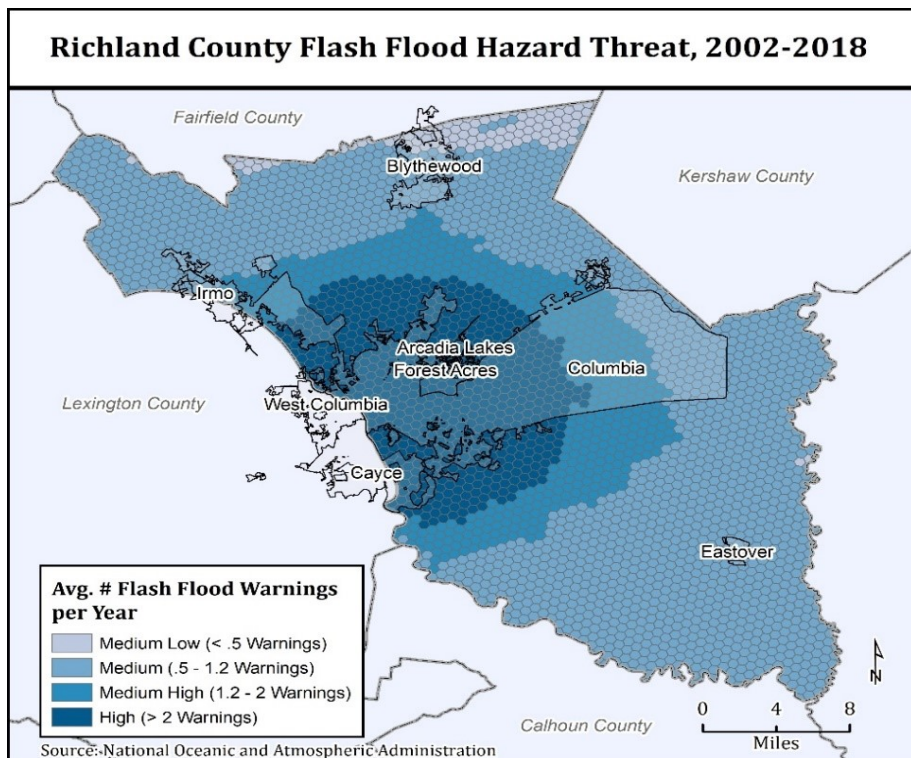
Map 10.5: Severe Storm



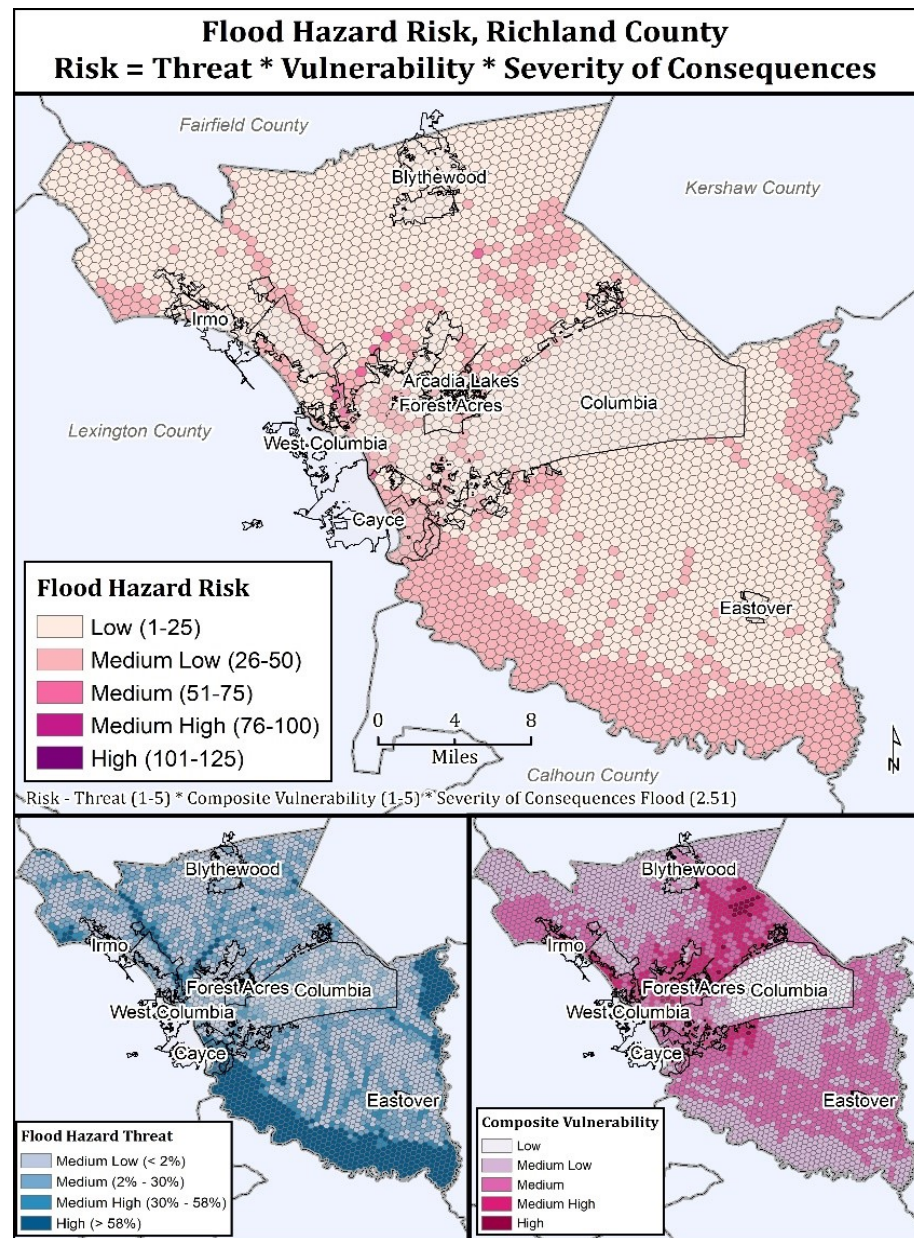


**Flood Risk.** The Town of Blythewood does not have the same level of catastrophic flood risk as other parts of the County and the Central Midlands Region. Because the Town is situated on the ridgeline between two river basins with well drained soils, there are not many flood prone areas within the municipal limits. Flood damage in Blythewood typically results from localized heavy precipitation and flash flooding. Significant rain events like the one experienced in 2015 are expected to increase in frequency and intensity in future years as a result of climate change.

**Map 10.6: Flash Flood Warnings**



**Map 10.7: Flood Hazard Risk**





## Economic Resilience and Recovery

Economic resilience is the ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from any type of major disruption to the local or regional economic base. A disruption can be caused by the loss of a major employer, by a downturn in a specific industry or cluster, by a larger economic recession, or by a man made or natural disaster. In order for a region to be resilient, it must be able to adequately evaluate socio- economic risk and vulnerabilities, assess potential impacts, and build the institutional capacity to mitigate, respond to, and recover from an event. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated just how socially and economically vulnerable we are, as it has impacted most every sector of the local and regional economy, and has exacerbated many pre-existing socioeconomic disparities, such as job, food, and housing insecurity.

In order to increase the ability to withstand, absorb, and recover from such major economic disruptions, communities must work together to promote regional economic diversification, workforce resiliency, protection of critical economic and infrastructure assets, and regional coordination for pre and post disaster planning.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

The Disaster Relief and Resilience Act requires local governments to provide written notification by the local planning commission or its staff, to adjacent jurisdictions and agencies, regarding proposed hazard resilience, recovery, response, and mitigation projects. Relevant jurisdictions, partners, and organizations to be notified of proposed projects are listed in Table 10.3.

**Table 10.3: Partner Organizations and Agencies**

Local Governments	State/Regional/Special Purpose Districts	Other Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richland County Emergency Management</li> <li>Fairfield County Emergency Management</li> <li>City of Columbia Emergency Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central Midlands Council of Governments</li> <li>SC Office of Resilience</li> <li>SC Disaster Recovery Office</li> <li>SC Emergency Management Division</li> <li>SC DNR Flood Mitigation Program</li> <li>SC DNR State Climatology Office</li> <li>SC Department of Public Safety</li> <li>SC Department of Transportation</li> <li>Richland School District 2</li> <li>Richland County Recreation Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighborhood Organizations</li> <li>United Way of the Midlands</li> </ul>





## Summary of Key Findings

- The Blythewood area generally has a medium social vulnerability rating
- The Blythewood area generally has a medium to low composite hazard threat
- The Town is vulnerable to extreme heat, drought, and winter weather
- The Town generally has a low flood hazard risk
- The entire county is at risk from tropical storm and hurricane force winds and associated heavy precipitation
- Significant weather related hazard events are expected to increase in frequency and intensity as a result of climate change
- The local and regional economy continues to be impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Government and Stakeholder Coordination.** The Town should continue to build and strengthen relationships with neighboring jurisdictions and organizational partners, and collaborate with them on the planning and implementation of natural hazard mitigation and economic resiliency and recovery projects. The Town should also coordinate closely with CMCOG to help keep the Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan up-to-date, and to pursue FEMA grant funding for mitigation projects.

**Economic Resilience and Recovery.** The Town should continue to work with local and regional partners to support economic recovery and impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## GOAL #8

**Strengthen Blythewood’s ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards, economic downturns, and other community vulnerabilities**

### Strategies:

- Work with Central Midlands Council of Governments to update, adopt, and maintain the Blythewood portion of the 2021 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Review and update priority hazard mitigation strategies and identify funding opportunities for implementation
- Coordinate resilience efforts with neighboring jurisdictions and partner agencies/organizations to include developing a contact database of stakeholders and system for outreach and coordination
- Support local and regional economic recovery and resilience



# 11 Priority Investment



## Introduction

The South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 was amended in 2007 to include the South Carolina Priority Investment Act (PIA). The intent of the PIA is to improve the planning and multi-jurisdictional coordination of public infrastructure decisions and to encourage the development of affordable housing and traditional neighborhood design. To accomplish these goals, the priority investment element requires local governments to assess the availability of public funds for infrastructure improvements and to prioritize these improvements for expenditure over the next ten years. The act also gives local governments the flexibility of designating specific “priority investment” areas within their jurisdiction; these designations will promote and direct growth in areas where existing or planned infrastructure can support higher intensities of development.

## Local Government Funding Sources

**General Fund.** The General Fund accounts for all funding resources in the Town not otherwise devoted to specific activities. This funding source includes revenues from ad valorem taxes (real estate and personal property), licenses and permits, charges for services, intergovernmental funding, other taxes, and miscellaneous revenue and other funding sources. These funds are generally spent on general government services, public safety, public works and utilities, and health and human services. Expenditures include, but are not limited to, salaries for department employees, supply and fuel costs, and building improvements. Capital and infrastructure improvements are funded in part through the General Funds. The FY 2021-2022 General Fund Budget for the Town was \$1.8 million.

**Local Hospitality Tax.** A local hospitality tax is levied on consumers purchasing prepared foods and beverages from vendors located within the jurisdiction enacting the tax. Counties in South Carolina are authorized to levy a hospitality tax of up to 2% if approved by a majority of the governing body. This tax limit is reduced to 1% if it is not also approved by municipal governing bodies within the County (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 6-1-700). H-Tax revenues are a significant source of funding for the Town. In FY 21 the Town received \$429,162 in H-Tax revenues and had \$406,410 in H-Tax expenditures.

**Local and State Accommodation Tax.** Accommodation taxes are levied on the rental of rooms, lodging, or sleeping accommodations. The state accommodations tax is a mandatory 2 percent charge applied to all accommodations statewide. The SC Department of Revenue collects these dollars and distributes them back to cities and counties by a location based formula. Municipalities receiving more than \$50,000 in revenue from the state tax must appoint an advisory committee to make recommendations on how the funds should be spent. Local governments in South Carolina are also authorized to levy an additional local accommodation tax of up to 7% of the gross proceeds derived by business owners renting rooms, lodging, or sleep accommodations. An accommodation tax also imposes a sales tax of up to 5% on additional guest services offered at facilities not otherwise taxed under South Carolina law (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 12-36-920). Accommodation tax revenues must be spent on tourism related expenditures. Accommodations tax revenues are an important source of funding for the Town. In FY 21 the Town received \$116,887 in A-Tax revenues and had \$100,028 in A-Tax expenditures.



**Lease-Purchase Agreements.** Lease-Purchase Agreements allow a local government to acquire capital assets by making a series of lease payments that are considered installments towards the purchase of the asset. Under a lease-purchase agreement, the local government acquires full ownership of the property covered by the lease by making all of the lease payments over the full term of the lease. The town has used lease-purchase agreements to acquire community facilities related amenities such as playground equipment.

**C-Funds.** C-Funds are allocated to each County within the State by the South Carolina Department of transportation (SCDOT) for the purpose of transportation improvements. The source of the funds is the State gasoline tax and State law requires that these improvements be tied to the transportation system and that at least 25% of the funds be spent on the state highway system. Funds are awarded through a competitive process by a committee designated by the State Legislature, referred to as the County Transportation Committee (CTC). These funds reimburse the Town and County for specified projects approved by the CTC. As a result, C-Funds are restricted for specific uses and cannot be used for all capital projects. More often than not, C-Funds are used for street/road paving and repaving projects. The town has an intergovernmental agreement with Richland County which uses C-Funds to maintain the roads in the town.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Guideshare.** Guideshare funding is available for each of the South Carolina Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Councils of Government (COG) for system upgrade projects. This dollar amount is calculated by taking the MPO's or COG's specific proportion of the state population and applying it to the total available funds for system upgrades. The funds are allocated in the Federal Highway Appropriation Bill. The Town of Blythewood is located in The Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS) MPO. COATS receives approximately \$18 million per year in Guideshare funding.

**Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).** TAP funding is federal funding available for projects that are related to activities that improve the transportation experience, including landscaping, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, historic preservation and other visual amenities related to the transportation system. These funds are administered through COATS and are made available to local governments through a competitive grant process.

## Other Funding Sources

Additional revenue sources are available to the local governments for funding large-scale planning initiatives or capital improvements. Some of these sources require action by municipal or County Council in accordance with the Code of Laws of South Carolina as amended. A summary of potential funding sources available for projects in the comprehensive plan follows. Individual limitations or conditions for each option have not been reviewed for this document.

**Grants.** Grants represent discretionary, lump-sum funding secured by the Town for specific one-time projects. There is no assurance that previous grant monies will be made available again in the future; however, the Comprehensive Plan assumes some growth will continue to be funded with grants. In many cases, receiving grant monies obligates the Town to spend additional dollars to meet local match requirements for the grant received.

**Real Estate Transfer Fees.** A real estate transfer fee is a charge on the transfer, sale, or conveyance of real property. It is applied against the purchase price of the property, and can be restricted to certain types of capital expenditures. The South Carolina Legislature has strictly forbidden the implementation of a real estate transfer fee without expressed authorization from the state legislature (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 6-1-70).



**State Infrastructure Bank.** The South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) selects and assists in financing major qualified projects by providing loans and other financial assistance for constructing and improving highway and transportation facilities. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

**General Obligation Bonds.** General Obligation Bonds (GO Bonds) are backed by the “full faith and credit” of the City and County, and are usually considered a safe investment for bondholders. The principal and interest on general obligation bonds are normally paid through a property tax levy.

**Revenue Bonds.** Revenue bonds are used when the Town issues a bond and pledges the revenues received from services provided as payments for the debt service. This revenue is used to pay both principal and interest on the bond. While revenue bonds incur slightly higher interest costs than general obligation bonds, they do not use up the Town’s bond capacity.

**Local Improvement Districts (LIDs).** Counties and municipalities in South Carolina are authorized to create a local improvement district for capital projects. Provisions for assessing and levying property taxes in different areas and at different rates are set forth in the Code of Laws of South Carolina, Section 4-9-30(5)(a). A local improvement district links together the costs and benefits resulting from new or upgraded capital facilities. Generally, property owners in the new tax district must agree to the new assessment. Capital projects in the special benefit tax district can be bond-financed and paid over time by the benefitting property owners to expedite implementation.

**Developer In-Kind Contributions.** In some instances, the owner(s) of property seeking entitlements for their land may elect during the development review process to donate right-of-way or construct certain “oversized” capital projects simply for the public good as well as to serve their development. The type and/or magnitude of these contributions vary greatly from location to location and owner to owner.

**Impact Fees.** Impact Fees are intended to enable new growth to pay for the services it generates a need for such as schools, recreation, and public safety. These fees are established based on the capital and operating impacts of new development and are paid by the developer or ownership interest.

## Capital Improvement Planning

The Town has established a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as part of its annual budget process to help fund needed improvements to Town owned facilities. Budgeted expenditures in the CIP include legal and professional services, vehicle replacement, roof and porch improvements for the Hoffman House, and HVAC improvements for the Hoffman House. The Town also has a separate CIP included in the budget process for improvements to DOKO Manor. Budgeted expenditures include carpet replacement, roof maintenance and repairs, and HVAC maintenance and repairs. Funding for the Manor CIP is generated through appropriations from the H-Tax fund.

## Priority Investment Areas

The Town has identified the Town Center district as its priority investment area. Because of the size and nature of the Town Center District, this priority investment area includes other priority investment areas of the Town including the I-77 Interchange at Blythewood Road, Blythewood Town Hall and DOKO Manor/Park, and the key intersection of Main Street and McNulty Street.



## Intergovernmental Coordination

The Planning Act requires that comprehensive plan priority investment recommendations on public infrastructure projects be done through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. In practice, South Carolina jurisdictions accomplish this coordination by providing neighboring jurisdictions and agencies access to their draft comprehensive plans and providing them an opportunity to comment. During the public comment period, the draft comprehensive plan will be posted on the Town’s website. The jurisdictions and agencies listed in Table 11.1 will be given a link to the plan on the website and invited to review and provide comment on the plan.

**Table 11.1: Partner Organizations and Agencies**

Local Governments	State/Regional/Special Purpose Districts	Other Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richland County</li> <li>• Fairfield County</li> <li>• Kershaw County</li> <li>• City of Columbia</li> <li>• Town of Winnsboro</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Midlands Council of Governments</li> <li>• Columbia Area Transportation Study</li> <li>• Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging</li> <li>• SC Department of Public Safety</li> <li>• SC Department of Transportation</li> <li>• Richland School District 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blythewood Historical Society and Museum</li> <li>• Greater Blythewood Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Blythewood Artists Guild/Bravo Blythewood</li> <li>• Richland County Conservation Commission</li> <li>• Doko Meadows Park Foundation</li> </ul>



## Summary of Key Findings

- The Town has a balanced budget with limited revenue sources
- There are a number of potential funding sources available to assist with project/plan implementation
- The Town has many local government and organizational partners to coordinate with

## Issues and Opportunities:

**Government and Stakeholder Coordination.** Because the Town relies on partnerships and coordination with other governmental agencies and stakeholder organizations for public services, it is essential for the Town to cultivate and maintain these collaborative relationships. This should continue to be an ongoing priority for the Town to ensure other service providers are aware of all Town needs and concerns. Staff should continue to update and maintain a comprehensive contact database for adjacent jurisdictions and relevant agencies.

**Revenue and Funding.** The Town should continue to monitor and pursue alternative funding sources for public services and public facility improvements. Diversifying the Town's funding portfolio will allow it to sustain and grow existing service levels and provide new opportunities as they arise.

## GOAL #6

**Provide a high level of public services and infrastructure in an efficient, cost-effective, and respectful manner**

### Strategies:

- Pursue new revenue and funding opportunities
- Update and maintain adjacent jurisdiction and relevant agency contact database and outreach/notification procedures



# 12

## Implementation

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# Implementation Plan

The implementation plan identifies action strategies that correspond to the goals and objectives identified in Chapter 1. These strategies are also designed to reflect the community needs identified in each of the nine elements of the comprehensive plan. Because these goals, objectives, and strategies are not specific to any one element, and in many cases relate to multiple elements at the same time, it makes sense to present them all together with notations reflecting which of the nine elements each strategy relates to. In addition to identifying individual strategies, the implementation plan also satisfies state planning and enabling act requirements by specifying a general time frame and responsible entity for each action.

As discussed in Chapter 1, goals and objectives are designed to be broad based policy statements that reflect the desired vision for future growth and development. Implementation strategies are designed to be realistic and implementable actions that will help to achieve the goals during the life of the plan. The time frames specified for each strategy are broken into the following four categories

- **Short-term strategies** generally consist of local and regional coordination efforts and planning projects or inventories that do not require considerable staff time or financial resources to implement. Such strategies should be considered for implementation within a 1-2-year time frame.
- **Medium-term strategies** consist of planning projects or policy changes that have an immediate need but may require a significant amount of staff time, coordination and public participation efforts, and the allocation of financial resources to implement. Such strategies should be considered for implementation within a 2-5-year time frame.
- **Long-term strategies** consist of major planning projects or changes in policies or administrative operations and may require considerable staff time, the procurement of professional services, and/or the allocation of significant financial resources. Such strategies should be considered for implementation within a 5-10-year time frame.
- **Ongoing strategies** consist of local and regional coordination efforts, inventories, database maintenance, and planning projects that should be considered for immediate and ongoing implementation.



**GOAL  
#1**

**Support the health, economic well-being,  
and quality of life for all residents, visitors, and businesses**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Support the aging population by working with local and regional senior service providers to identify needs and assist with project and program delivery	Blythewood, Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging, Senior Resources	Ongoing	Population, Community Facilities
Attract and retain millennials and young families by supporting policies and projects that continue to position Blythewood as a regional destination and activity center (e.g., community events, recreational facilities, trails and greenspace, etc.)	Blythewood, Blythewood Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	Population, Housing, Community Facilities, Priority Investment
Promote diversity and social equity in all Town policies, program, and services (e.g., procurement policy, zoning ordinance, community events, new cultural center)	Blythewood	Short	Population, Housing, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Resilience
Support public health initiatives with a focus on healthy eating and active living	Blythewood	Medium	Population, Community Facilities, Resilience
Monitor growth and development trends by annually tracking building permits, business licenses, and decennial census updates	Blythewood	Short	Population, Housing, Economic, Land Use, Community Facilities
Promote and expand opportunities for community and civic engagement	Blythewood	Ongoing	Population, Community Facilities



**GOAL  
#2**

**Support a diverse and resilient local and regional economy**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Strengthen and grow the Town Center business district	Blythewood	Medium	Economic, Community Facilities, Land Use
Grow small, locally owned, service and retail oriented businesses	Blythewood, Blythewood Chamber of Commerce	Medium	Economic, Population, Community Facilities
Coordinate with Richland County to develop adopt and implement plans for the industrial park	Blythewood, Richland County, Urban Land Institute, Blythewood Chamber of Commerce	Short	Economic
Support/grow the local hospitality/entertainment industry	Blythewood, Blythewood Chamber of Commerce	Medium	Economic, Population, Community Facilities
Grow as a local and regional event destination/activity center	Blythewood	Long	Economic, Population, Community Facilities
Promote the farmers market, local agriculture, and other food related businesses	Blythewood, Blythewood Chamber of Commerce	Short	Economic, Population, Community Facilities
Track/market available commercial space and lots	Blythewood	Medium	Economic



**GOAL  
#3**

**Ensure an adequate and balanced supply of quality housing options are available and accessible to residents of all ages and incomes**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Identify opportunities for promoting a diversity of housing types in different zoning districts	Blythewood	Medium	Housing, Land Use
Support senior housing and “aging in place” by reviewing and updating the zoning ordinance as needed to strengthen accessibility standards and zoning compatibility	Blythewood	Short	Housing, Land Use
Identify strategies for preserving existing neighborhood character and vitality	Blythewood	Ongoing	Housing, Land Use
Continue to promote mixed use developments in applicable districts, with specific consideration for the Town Center district	Blythewood	Short	Housing, Land Use
Coordinate with Richland County on development impacts and zoning compatibility for new, proposed housing developments in unincorporated areas adjacent to the Town of Blythewood	Blythewood	Ongoing	Housing, Land Use, Community Facilities



**GOAL  
#4**

**Protect, preserve, and promote Blythewood’s natural and cultural resources**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Develop open space protection standards and incentives	Blythewood	Medium	Natural Resources, Land Use, Resilience
Evaluate/strengthen stream buffer standards	Blythewood	Short	Natural Resources, Land Use
Preserve agriculture and forestry “working lands	Blythewood, Richland County	Long	Natural Resources, Land Use
Develop an area-wide trail/greenway plan to include development of a prioritized project list and identification of potential funding opportunities	Blythewood	Medium	Natural Resources, Land Use, Transportation
Engage with partners in watershed based planning initiatives for Twenty Five Mile Creek and other impaired watersheds	Blythewood	Ongoing	Natural Resources, Resilience, Community Facilities
Develop a multi-cultural events/civic center	Blythewood, Community Organizations	Medium	Cultural Resources, Population
Promote diversity and inclusion in local history and heritage preservation to include documenting local African American history and landmarks	Blythewood, Blythewood Historical Society and Museum	Short	Cultural Resources, Population
Work with local and state partners to establish historical markers and expand local history education and outreach	Blythewood, Blythewood Historical Society and Museum, SHPO	Ongoing	Cultural Resources, Population
Plan/host regularly scheduled regional/local events and activities	Blythewood, Community Organizations	Ongoing	Cultural Resources



**GOAL  
#5**

**Coordinate with partners to mitigate congestion, implement road improvements, and promote multi-modal connectivity**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Continue to work with partners to implement priority transportation projects to include McNulty Street, Creech Road, and Langford Road/Blythewood Road	Blythewood, Richland County, SCDOT, CMCOG	Short - Long	Transportation, Priority Investment
Coordinate with Richland County, SCDOT, CMCOG to keep up-to-date on the status of funded transportation project and to communicate transportation needs	Blythewood, Richland County, SCDOT, CMCOG	Ongoing	Transportation, Priority Investment
Evaluate feasibility/prioritize intersection improvements and other projects identified in the Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan	Blythewood, Richland County, SCDOT, CMCOG	Ongoing	Transportation, Priority Investment
Develop an area-wide trail/greenway plan	Blythewood, CMCOG	Medium	Transportation, Population, Community Facilities, Natural Resources, Priority Investment
Evaluate, prioritize, and work with partners to implement bike and pedestrian improvements to include enhancements to the I-77 overpass	Blythewood	Medium	Transportation, Population, Community Facilities, Natural Resources, Priority Investment
Support development of future intercity rail connections between Columbia and Charlotte	Blythewood, CMCOG, City of Columbia	Long	Transportation
Promote and support adoption of congestion management strategies (e.g., remote work, rideshare, etc.)	Blythewood, CMCOG	Ongoing	Transportation, Economic, Population



**GOAL  
#6**

**Provide a high level of public services and infrastructure in an efficient, cost-effective, and respectful manner**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Continue coordination with Richland County to enhance and sustain public safety and EMS services	Blythewood, Richland County	Ongoing	Community Facilities
Continue coordination with Winnsboro, Columbia, Richland County, and Southwest Water (FKA Palmetto Utilities) to enhance and sustain quality water, sewer, and stormwater services	Blythewood, Richland County, Winnsboro, City of Columbia, Southwest Water	Ongoing	Community Facilities
Work with Richland County and other community partners to develop a new regional active recreation facility in the Blythewood Area	Blythewood, Richland County	Short	Community Facilities, Population, Economic
Maintain, enhance, and expand Doko Meadows Park and recreation facilities to include safety and security measures, new playground equipment, and event venue improvements	Blythewood	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Population, Economic
Coordinate with Richland School District 2 to ensure school facilities are keeping pace with residential development and community needs	Blythewood, Richland District 2	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Population, Economic, Housing
Evaluate the feasibility of implementing co-location, joint use agreements for public facilities with Richland 2 and Richland County	Blythewood, Richland District 2, Richland County	Medium	Community Facilities
Ensure Town staffing and service levels are keeping pace with growth and changing community needs	Blythewood	Ongoing	Community Facilities
Pursue new revenue and funding opportunities	Blythewood	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Priority Investment
Update and maintain adjacent jurisdiction and relevant agency contact database and outreach/notification procedures	Blythewood	Ongoing	Community Facilities, Priority Investment



**GOAL  
#7**

**Coordinate with partners and neighboring jurisdictions to manage growth and preserve Blythewood’s small town, rural character**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Review and update zoning ordinance and land development regulations with particular consideration given to: reducing the number of districts, simplifying district regulations, and incentivizing the protection open space and “working lands”	Blythewood	Medium	Land Use, Population, Housing, Community Facilities, Natural Resources
Assess annexation priorities and feasibility with a focus on donut holes and adjacent areas with development potential	Blythewood	Short	Land Use, Population, Housing, Community Facilities
Establish trail and open space zoning provisions	Blythewood	Short	Land Use, Natural Resources, Transportation, Community Facilities
Continue to support and strengthen the Town Center District	Blythewood	Ongoing	Land Use, Housing, Economic, Community Facilities
Evaluate strategies for rural landscape preservation	Blythewood	Short	Land Use, Natural Resources, Economic
Coordinate with Richland County to ensure compatible land use and zoning designations for properties in potential growth areas	Blythewood, Richland County	Ongoing	Land Use, Housing





**GOAL  
#8**

**Strengthen Blythewood’s ability to respond to and recover from natural hazards, economic downturns, and other community vulnerabilities**

Strategy	Responsibility	Time Frame	Elements
Work with Central Midlands Council of Governments to update, adopt, and maintain the Blythewood portion of the 2021 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan	Blythewood, CMCOG	Short	Resilience, Population, Natural Resources, Community Facilities
Review and update priority hazard mitigation strategies and identify funding opportunities for implementation	Blythewood, CMCOG	Ongoing	Resilience, Population, Natural Resources, Community Facilities
Coordinate resilience efforts with neighboring jurisdictions and partner agencies/organizations to include developing a contact database of stakeholders and system for outreach and coordination	Blythewood, CMCOG	Medium	Resilience, Population, Natural Resources, Community Facilities
Support local and regional economic recovery and resilience	Blythewood, Blythewood Chamber of Commerce, CMCOG	Short, Ongoing	Resilience, Population, Natural Resources, Community Facilities